



NOTES FROM MINTO MANUSCRIPTS ...

EMMA ELEANOR ELLIOT-MURRAY-
KYNYNMOUND MINTO



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Notes from Minto Manuscripts

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Emma Eleanor

Elliot-Murray-Kynynmound Minto

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NOTES

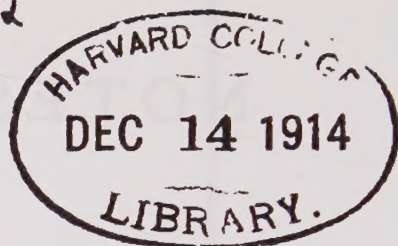
FROM

MINTO MANUSCRIPTS

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INTRODUCTORY.

THE correspondence of my grandfather may be divided into two portions: the first collected from the Minto MSS., containing letters addressed to his family by himself or by others, on matters affecting him; of these letters none are earlier in date than 1762 none later than 1776: the second portion composed of several volumes of letters, private and official, written to him by various persons between 1772 and 1785. These were all in his own keeping at the time of his death, and were sent to Minto a few years ago by my mother, along with some other MSS. of a later date, which had also belonged to him.

The letters bound in volumes have been generally collected under three heads: Family Letters; Foreign Miscellaneous Letters; English Miscellaneous Letters. There are, however, two or three volumes entirely occupied by the correspondence of particular friends, as Mr. Liston, Sir James and Lady Harris, and others; and there are volumes of official correspondence with the Office and with

his colleagues at foreign Courts; among whom were Lord Stormont,* Sir R. Keith,† and Messrs. De Vismes,‡ Wroughton,§ Morton Eden, and Osborn.

All these papers, and many others which have undergone no such process of classification, were left with other property of Mr. Elliot's at Dresden in 1802, when he was transferred from that mission to Naples; and he appears to have taken no steps for their removal before the French occupation of Dresden in 1806, which rendered their recovery impossible. My grandfather had long since given them up for lost, when, some time after the peace, he, being then governor of Madras, received a letter from Dresden, which informed him that his long-lost property had been safely preserved by some friends there, who, having saved it from falling into the hands of the French, now only waited his directions to restore it to him. As it comprised plate, pictures, china, and other things far more valuable as plunder than manuscripts, he was as much surprised as pleased by the communication; nevertheless, with his habitual carelessness, he took no steps to recover his losses for some years, and it was not till 1826 that he was prevailed on to let my uncle Frederick, who was then a mere lad, proceed to Dresden in quest of the long-lost property. There, accordingly, in a cellar, perfectly

* Minister at Vienna and Paris.

† Vienna.

‡ Stockholm.

§ Warsaw.

intact and uninjured, were found some of the most valuable contents of the *ci-devant Hôtel du Ministre Britannique*, which in the moment of flight had been abandoned to their fate.

The only paper which my grandfather had been anxious to recover, was a private memorandum in Mr. Pitt's handwriting, containing instructions for his guidance, and this, on regaining it, he sent to the Foreign Office.

The mixture of order and disorder in the arrangement of these papers is extraordinary. It might be supposed that some one, acting on a suggestion that all the letters should be classified under specified heads, had thrown the contents of desks and drawers into so many several heaps, and had then, without further selection, proceeded to bind them together. Along with letters from royalties, generals, and statesmen, are found the most trivial notes. Letters of introduction to insignificant persons are preserved as carefully as those from Mirabeau, Romantzow, and Nelson. More than a third of these bulky volumes might be burnt without loss, and yet enough would remain to give a finished picture of the society in which my grandfather spent his youth.

The letters of 1775 and 1776 are so numerous and so abundant in personal details, that one feels on intimate terms with the writers and the correspondents.

Strange that it should be so! that, after so long a silence, the dead should speak again,—should be restored to our knowledge in all the freshness of their youth, introducing us to sorrows which they themselves long outlived, and to sentiments forgotten sooner still. But if these thoughts be startling to us, what would *their* feelings have been could they have foreseen that the follies of the moment were to be handed down to generations unborn? What would the flirting *dame de cour* have said could she have guessed that the indolent Englishman, who rarely troubled himself to answer her notes, would preserve them for the amusement of his descendants? And what would have been felt by the mother and sisters, who believed themselves to possess all his confidence, had they been told that to us would be given the clue they never found, to the thoughts and affections of one of those dearest to them? That Minto—that generation—has long since passed away, and we, now sojourning here, wonder whether they in their day knew as much of each other as we know of them. Truly, even in this world, all hearts are laid open, all secrets made known; even here, a day of judgment is for ever going on!

NINA MINTO.

MINTO, *July* 1862.

ERRATA.

- Page 41, line 4, *for* "haissiez," *read* haïssiez.
Page 45, line 11 from bottom, *insert* a full stop at Duchesse.
Page 48, line 3, *for* "1766," *read* 1776.
Page 49, line 2, *for* "1779," *read* 1777.
Page 76, line 2, delete "to :782."
Page 79, line 7 from bottom, *for* "fill'dst," *read* fill'dst.
Page 84, line 3, *for* "nécessaire," *read* nécessaire.
Page 85, line 5, *for* "Thiebault," *read* Thiébault.
Page 121, line 16, *for* "for America early in the present year, 1778. She," *read*
for America. Early in the present year, 1778, she.
Page 125, line 19, *for* "on the high seas. The Dowager Lady Elliot nursing,"
read, on the high seas ; the Dowager Lady Elliot nursing.
Page 139, line 15, *for* "Gently," *read* Greatly.
Page 145, line 9, *for* "intéressantes," *read* intéressantes.
Page 155, line 5 from bottom, *after* the word "family," *insert* and.
Page 168, line 10, *for* "titles," *read* tables.
Page 171, line 10 from bottom, *for* "de," *read* du.
Page 184, line 11, *for* "March," *read* May.
Page 198, lines 9 and 10 from bottom, delete quotations.
Page 273, line 13, *for* "avez," *read* avoir.
Page 276, line 7, delete "original."



CHAPTER THE FIRST.

1762 to 1776.

HUGH'S EDUCATION—EXPEDITION TO POLAND AND THE
DANUBIAN PROVINCES—MISSION TO MUNICH—RECALL
TO ENGLAND.

YOU have asked me to put on paper the leading facts which I have gathered from my grandfather's correspondence concerning his early life, and I am the more willing to do so, because I know by experience how much the letters gain in interest by being read with some previous knowledge of the circumstances under which they were written, and of the events to which they relate.

With the laudable desire to begin at the beginning, I should gladly trace the manner in which my grandfather's earliest years were spent, but unfortunately I have no means of doing so; the oldest letter in my possession is of the date of 1762, when he was ten years old, and was living with his family at Twickenham; and in none of the subsequent letters have I found any internal evidence as to the locality which they looked upon

as home. In none is there any allusion to favourite haunts, to gardens or games, to dependants or pets; nothing to shew affection for home as a place. Strong family affection has been ever a characteristic of the race, and to be together was at all times an object of tenderest longing, but where the meeting should take place seems to have been a matter of indifference.

From this I am led to suppose, that during the youth of the family, their parents had led an unsettled life, probably dividing their time between Parliamentary duties in London, and visits to relations in Edinburgh, occasionally living at Lochgelly, and occasionally at Minto. It is possible, too, that the home life may not have been of the kind to make itself remembered with unmixed pleasure. Sir Gilbert* was a grave, highly cultivated man, immersed in politics, and, like all fathers of his time, he seems to have inspired his family with as much awe as admiration.

Lady Elliot,† clever, high-spirited, and imaginative, was not, like one who filled her place in after years,

“Blessed with a temper, whose unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day.”

Her preference for those of her children who most resembled herself was openly avowed, and in

* Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto, third Baronet, M.P., a Lord of the Admiralty, distinguished by his literary tastes as well as his political abilities.

† Agnes Murray Kynynmound, heiress of Melgund in Forfar, and of Lochgelly and Kynynmound, in Fifeshire. She was habitually addressed as Lady Elliot Murray.

Isabella and Hugh, she cultivated rather than repressed the uncontrolled sensibility, the romantic impulsiveness of character, and "high imaginings," which, in the case of the sister, probably increased constitutional tendencies to the extent of rendering them morbid, and which in that of the brother diminished the successfulness of his career, and the happiness of his life. Her eldest son Gilbert* and her youngest daughter Eleanor, were not supposed by her to be of the porcelain clay of which the rest were made, and her allusions, soon after Hugh left her, to Gilbert's coldness of manner, as compared with Hugh's more demonstrative nature, is not less striking, when we find that she lived to give her entire confidence to her eldest son, and to be on terms approaching to estrangement with the younger.

To a want therefore of home sunshine, it is possible that we may in part ascribe the fact, that the letters written from home, deal chiefly with news, with politics, or with advice, while those addressed there by the absent sons, are confined to matters affecting their studies and pursuits.

From their earliest years the boys were training for the world.

"Life," says Byron, "has no Present," but childhood is a time of life which should form an exception to the rule, a time when stores of mental as of bodily health may be laid up in days of careless enjoyment.

* The absence of Alick in India, and the youth of Bob, prevented them from playing an equal part with the others in the family drama.

At twelve years old, Hugh was with his elder brother in Paris, learning French and *l'usage du monde* under the auspices of David Hume.

The circumstances of the family probably had much to do with the eagerness with which the boys were prepared to enter on the arena where honours were to be won. Poor, proud of their position, which was the fruit of ability, the parents strove to fit the sons to keep what themselves had gained. Gilbert, writing to his mother from Edinburgh, in reply to a letter of congratulation on a successful display in the Rhetorical Society, deprecates her being too much elated by his success ; though, he says, he well knows the importance of obtaining the power of public speaking.

I am, however, anticipating events ; so, to proceed with my story in order. In 1762, Mr. Liston* was engaged to be their tutor, and during that and the following year his pupils appear to have lived at Twickenham, and to have prosecuted the ordinary studies of their age under his superintendence. Towards the end of 1764 they went to Paris, where they remained two years. They were specially commended to the charge of Mr. Hume, who shewed them great civility, and while at a *pension* near Paris they formed the acquaintance of Mirabeau, then a boy of their own age in the same school. In one of Gilbert's letters to his father, he particularly mentions that Mira-

* Robert Liston, Esq., of New Liston, near Edinburgh, afterwards Sir R. Liston, and minister at Madrid, etc. ; his salary as tutor was £25 a year, bed, board, and washing.

beau had gained some distinction by his delivery of a discourse in favour of mathematics.

In 1766 they returned to their own country, and were sent to continue their studies in Edinburgh, under the superintendence of Professor George Stuart. In those days, as at present, the education given in Edinburgh was of a multifarious description. Both brothers studied natural and moral philosophy, mathematics, classics, chemistry, rhetoric, drawing, fencing, and dancing; to these studies Gilbert added that of civil law, so that their week-day time was thoroughly well filled, and Sundays found them glad to enjoy the recreation of a quiet dinner party with their grand-mamma* and aunts,† who lived in Edinburgh.

After a slight illness of Hugh's in 1766, Mr. Stuart writes as follows to Sir Gilbert:—"Hugh's popularity is such that since he has been allowed to see any one his *levée* has been crowded." In the same letter he says, "Gilbert is pleased with himself; he does nothing for show."

About this time Hugh wrote to his mother an account of a visit which he paid to Mr. Liston's farm for change of air. "We are just returned from a jaunt to Mr. Liston's farm, where I have in a good measure made up all the beef I lost in my last illness. We arrived there at eight o'clock on Saturday night, and were most agreeably sur-

* Helen Stuart (Dowager Lady Elliot) was daughter of Sir Robert Stuart of Allanbank, Bart., Berwickshire, and widow of Lord Minto, Justice-Clerk.

† One of these, Miss Jane Elliot, was the authoress of the much admired ballad, "The Flowers of the Forest."

prised by the sound of a fiddle. I immediately conjectured that it was a penny wedding, and directly ran into the barn from whence the sound proceeded ; but was greatly disappointed when I saw some young ladies of six feet high, with immense fly caps and silk negligées, dancing with some farmers very near as tall as themselves. Quite vexed at my own insignificance, and frightened that I should be crushed to pieces every moment, I could scarcely be prevailed on to dance ; however, the first tremour being over, and seeing the tallest and most terrible strain his ankle, so that he could not return to the dance, I ventured to take out his partner, whose apron-strings I scarcely came up to, and danced down a country dance."

In the spring of the following year, after describing the order of their studies, Mr. Stuart writes :—"In everything where Hugh's age admits, he is really wonderful." Two months later, he says, "Your two young men are going on well in their studies, and are superior to most of their companions. I never had occasion to see two brothers so contrasted, and indeed I should find it a more difficult task to manage Hugh, were it not for the example of his brother. He is lively, agreeable, and popular. No wonder if his vivacity is now and then above his reason. As it is, he needs a very sharp eye;" and then follows an amusing account of some excesses into which poor Hugh had been led by the injudicious hospitalities of some of his friends. "Hugh has great honesty and candour," he writes on another occasion ; "If

his quickness and vivacity hurry him away, it will not be for want of taste and pënetration."

Dr. Somerville, writing to Lady Elliot in January 1768, mentions a circumstance which confirms the above account of Hugh's readiness:—"I attended them one evening to their Society (the Rhetorical); few of the young orators happened to be prepared upon the question of the night, and the debate was like to have come soon to a stand, when Mr. Hugh stood up with great spirit, and, to good purpose, spoke for some minutes in reply to what had been thrown out before. It gave surprise to every person present, and I never before had reason to think so highly of his abilities. If his appearance had not been superior to what might have been expected from many who are justly enough esteemed promising young men, I should not have said one word about it."*

In 1768, Gilbert and Hugh went to Oxford; but during this period I find scarcely any trace of Hugh. Soon after his arrival he wrote a letter to his father, from which the following extract will suffice to shew the manners and customs of Oxford nearly a century ago:—

"MY DEAR FATHER,—We are now beginning Nov. 11,
1768. to be a little settled to our business and situation, and I hope we may go on very well. As yet I have seen nothing which may interrupt us, for although most of the young people here are much idler than I could have conceived, yet as there

* For a further account of Hugh Elliot at this period, see Dr. Somerville's "Life and Times," p. 125.

are so many of them in the same way, and they have always enough to join in any idle scheme, they never trouble their heads about anybody else but those who are present.

"This, I think, is the ordinary way the noblemen and gentlemen commoners spend their day: get up at eight and go to prayers; breakfast at nine, and some hour in the forenoon read some Greek or Latin with their tutor; the rest of the forenoon is given up either to tennis, riding, shooting, but for the most part to lounging; dine at one; after dinner, they invite one another to each other's rooms, and sit there mostly till between three and four, then they go home and read another hour or two, and spend the evening between the coffee-house, cards, and the billiard table, till supper-time, when they sup at each other's rooms, where they stay, mostly, till twelve or one o'clock. . . . I daresay some spend the day to much better purpose.

"The tutor we met with seems to be a very good kind of man, and a good classical scholar, but I cannot find out that he has any other knowledge, at least not to any degree of perfection (I include history in the classics). We have just been dining with Dr. Markham, and I do not know anybody that he has had twice in his house in so short a time. He asked us what part of learning we were most deficient in. My brother told him that we knew little Greek, but that we found ourselves equal to most young men of our age in Latin, and that we had applied ourselves particularly to *mathématiques*, and had got the

rudiments of most of the sciences. He answered that, to be sure, *mathématiques*, and those kind of things, were very necessary for a gentleman, but that it was only classical and historical knowledge that make able statesmen, and then he went on to recommend the study of Greek. As, however, you intend me for the army,* I should think it very improper in me to give my time to it, as long as I have any of what he calls those 'kind of things' to learn. He also recommended the natural philosophy, as some of its branches were very necessary for an officer to learn, especially hydrostatics. In short, I think he endeavoured to recommend everything which is taught here, and dis-recommend everything which is not taught here. As for myself, this is the plan which I have laid down:—If I am to read law, six to eight, law; eight, prayers, which we all attend; sup and breakfast, nine to ten; we go to our tutors, ten to eleven; law again; eleven to one, history; one to two, dine; two to three, when I can get the dancing-master,

* General Scott of Scotstarbet, who was an intimate friend of Sir Gilbert's, presented his son, Mr. Hugh Elliot, in 1762, with a lieutenant's commission in a new levied regiment of which General Scott had got the Colonelcy.—(Letter of Sir Gilbert to Justice-Clerk, 1762.) Hugh was born in April 1752, and was at this time just ten years old. The favour was unsolicited, and, though an abuse, was considered as a privilege of the Colonel, and had been often exercised without attracting public notice or animadversion. According to the custom which had prevailed in other instances of commissions given to youths too young for actual service, Mr. Elliot's time should have counted from the date of his first commission, and should thus have entitled him to the same rank with those who had been in the regiment during that period.

who is very good, and who I shall soon have; draw, three to four; natural philosophy, four to five; after five, *conique* sections; the astronomy, by all accounts, is nothing; at half-past five, I will go to the coffee-house,—everybody goes there.

“We are told we must take great care never to speak upon politics, or prefer any other University to this.

“Frederick Stewart had given himself the airs of despising everything that was English, and speaking of everything that was Scotch, and had offended my uncle by speaking in the coffee-house of his father’s intrigue with the Princess of Wales. . . .

“Pray, Papa, if anybody asks you how we like Oxford, don’t tell them that we find fault with anything, for I never saw people so bigoted to any place in my life, and they are jealous of the least thing that can be construed against it.”

Paris, July
1770.

In 1770, we again find both brothers at Paris. An amusing letter from Hugh describes some of the first visits they paid on their arrival:—“As soon as we were equipped we waited on Mr. Walpole, who seems to be as dry and cold a kind of gentleman as ever I saw. He cleared up a little when he heard that we had some French acquaintance, and did not depend entirely upon him for introductions. His behaviour was not particular to us in this respect, but is the same to all the young English; and indeed, I think he is so far in the right, as it would be impossible to take any charge of such a parcel of raw ignorant

boys as most of them seem to be." In the same letter, the whole of which is amusing, he describes a visit to Madame de Boufflers,* "who was at her studies in her bed-chamber. She received us very kindly, and spoke about all our Scotch and English authors; if she had time, she would set about translating Mr. Smith's Moral Sentiments,—'Il a des idées si justes de la sympathie.' This book is now in great vogue here; this doctrine of sympathy bids fair for cutting out David Hume's Immaterialism, especially with the ladies, ever since they heard of his marriage."

Gilbert, writing in French, describes, with some particularity, the society of Madame Geoffrin,† and dwells on the trouble it gave her to "gouverner ses savans." The coterie of Madame Geoffrin was divided into two sets, which met alternately at her house on Mondays and Wednesdays, and disastrous would have been the fate of him who, by intention or mischance, should have presented himself before her on the wrong day. "Si les deux venaient par hasard à se rencontrer, elle dit que sa maison serait jetée par les fenêtres!" Gilbert gave the preference to the Wednesday meetings, on account of the presence of Made-

* Marquise de Boufflers, frequently mentioned in Walpole's *Correspondence* as *l'Idole du Temple*. Her reputation for gallantry and for pedantry seems to have been equally well sustained.

† Madame Geoffrin was celebrated in her day as a *bel-esprit*, and the patroness of literary men, the most eminent among whom met frequently at her house. Montesquieu, the *Encyclopédistes* L'Abbé Delille and La Harpe, were among her most intimate friends.—See article on Madame Geoffrin, *Bibliothèque Portative*.

moiselle L'Espinasse.* Madame du Deffand's society they described as "plus élevé que le Parnasse de Madame Geoffrin," and it was, as we know from Walpole, composed of all that was eminent in France, either by intellect or position.†

Gilbert writes at this time with some brotherly pride of Hugh's popularity with men and women, but a more impartial testimony to the merits of both brothers will be found in Madame du Deffand's published correspondence with Horace Walpole:‡—"Nous avons ici les enfants de M. Elliot. Ils sont infiniment aimables. Ils savent parfaitement le français, ils sont gais, doux, et polis, et plaisent à tout le monde. Je les vois souvent, j'ai pour eux toutes les attentions possibles, mais ils n'ont besoin de personne pour les faire valoir, on leur trouve une fort jolie figure."

In the autumn of 1770, Gilbert returned to Christ Church, and Hugh§ proceeded to Metz, where he proposed to study military science, and especially fortification, a camp being at that time held there for the instruction of the Duke de Chartres; and Madame de Boufflers and others gave him introductions to the officers in com-

* The *ci-devant* companion of Madame du Deffand, the friend of D'Alembert, and authoress of some celebrated letters.

† From Madame Riccoboni, another celebrated literary lady, and the authoress of several works, there are two or three letters in this collection written to my grandfather at Munich.

‡ Vol. ii. p. 81.

§ It appears from the letters that Sir Gilbert, believing that his son's claim to regimental rank would be in nowise affected by deferring the moment at which he should join, was anxious that his previous military education should be as complete as possible.

mand. He seems to have been struck by the absence of courtesy on the part of the French officers to their English guests : " The Swiss and German are, however, all the more civil to us on that account, for they are on ill terms with the French." From Metz, Hugh went to Strasburgh, Strasburgh. and thence returned to England. What became of him during the following year I do not discover ; but it was in the course of 1771, and when he had barely attained his nineteenth year, that he met with a disappointment which rankled in his mind through life. Having received, when still in his early childhood, a commission in the Guards, an honour which procured him the notoriety of an allusion in No. 45 of the *North Briton*, he now learnt that Lord Barrington refused to ratify the appointment, on the ground that such commissions, passing over inferior grades of rank, could only be given to princes of the blood-royal. The *rank* of captain, however, appears to have been granted him for the purpose, as we learn from one of his father's letters, of enabling him to enter a foreign army with certain advantages.*

The blow to Hugh must have been severe. All the military ardour which had been fostered by his supposed destination in life, was at once blighted, and at that time his love for the profession of arms is described as " a passion." He did not, however, at once forego his hope of gratifying it ; but, with the consent of his family,

* At that time no officer of the Austrian army holding a rank inferior to that of Captain was received in Viennese society.

he set out for Vienna, in the spring of 1772, with letters of introduction to Lord Stormont, and General Prince Poniatowski, and General Langlais.

It is impossible to read this episode in my grandfather's life, given with all the details of unreserved family correspondence, without remarking the change—it must be admitted for the better—which has taken place since those days, both in the manner of granting and of receiving appointments in the public service. Publicity has depressed patronage, and has made it necessary that young men should have such claims to preferment as will bear the investigation of the envious or the less fortunate; and the disappointed candidate hardly wonders while he grumbles at the discovery that, for every vacant appointment, there are found “five hundred good as he.” In 1772, the refusal to ratify such an appointment as that claimed by my grandfather, was looked on as the most cutting insult, the cruellest injury : foes were supposed to triumph over so great a disgrace; friends could not do enough to wipe out so crying an injustice.

A short stay at Vienna sufficed to shew there was little or no chance of obtaining the desired admission *with rank* into the Austrian army, but the time spent there was not without results, as it gained for Hugh the cordial friendship of Lord Stormont, the British Minister at Vienna, who remained his fast and useful friend.* From that

* Hugh was presented to the Emperor Joseph while at Vienna, and his father, in one of his letters, congratulates him on an opportunity of seeing that “remarkable young sovereign.”

period, too, dates his correspondence with Countess Thun, one of the most agreeable and cultivated women in Viennese society, of whom Wraxall* in his *Memoirs of the Court of Berlin*, etc., thus writes: "No capital in Europe can produce persons more distinguished by natural and acquired endowments, or of minds more liberal and enlarged than the Countess Thun and Countess Pergen; the houses of both are the rendezvous of everything that pretends to refinement in this capital." Years afterwards, Madame de Thun, in speaking of Hugh Elliot's appearance at this time at Vienna, said to Mr. Brydone, "Such as he was at eighteen years, so would I wish my son to be."†

Nothing can more strongly prove the engaging and attractive nature of his manners at this time, than the interest he inspired in persons so well acquainted with the world as Lord Stormont and Countess Thun, and I cannot resist giving one more extract in his praise from a letter of Lord Stormont's, which, though shewn to his family, had not been written for their eyes.

"VIENNA, Aug. 5, 1772.

"I must leave off, as I have several letters on hand, and give a little farewell dinner for Elliot,

* Wraxall's *Memoirs*, vol. ii.

† Mr. Brydone, writing from Vienna to Hugh in 1776, says, "Madame de Thun has everything but beauty. I have never seen a more agreeable or sensible woman. Her only wish, she says, is that her son should be like you."—*MS. Letters*, 1776.

Mr. Brydone, like many other English travellers, had been recommended by my grandfather to Madame de Thun.

who sets out to-morrow. I really see him go with much concern. The sweetness of his disposition, the manner in which the '*elements are blended*' in him, the variety of his accomplishments and pursuits, make him a young man so much after my heart, that I often lament in secret I am not the father of such a son, though God knows, I never was less disposed than at present to try my chance."

In writing to Sir Gilbert, Lord Stormont expresses a hope, that though Hugh had failed in the object of his journey to Vienna, "he would have no reason to repent it; it is an advantage to an Englishman to examine the detail, and contemplate all the consequences of severe discipline, though he may not expect, and perhaps should not attempt, to introduce it at home."

Spurred on by a thirst for military adventure, Hugh proceeded from Vienna to Warsaw, which capital he reached after a hazardous journey in company with an aide-de-camp of Marshal Romanzow. In spite of the deplorable condition of the country, overrun by the armies of the three great powers, and of a monarchy tottering to its fall,* Warsaw was at that time the most brilliant and dissipated Court in existence; and though the haughty minister† of Catherine did not think it worth while to rise from his chair when the King approached,‡ yet Stanislas Augustus, gifted him-

* The partition of Poland was determined in 1772.

† Stackelberg.

‡ Everybody knew Stackelberg to be the real king. If Stanislas entered the room when the Ambassador was at cards, the haughty

self with every grace, ruled over a nobility unequalled in Europe for beauty of person, for polish of manners, and for every accomplishment which lends a charm to society. No wonder then that the young Englishman should have found attractions enough to delay him there. From the correspondence which he subsequently carried on with the British Minister at Warsaw, Mr. Wroughton,* it appears that Princesses had conspired to detain him, and that the great Ambassador, Count Stackelberg himself, had been glad to see him go.

The "red planet Mars" was, however, still in the ascendant, and, under its influence, he again set forth to join the Russian army, then employed in Moldavia against the Turks.

This expedition, when known in England, seems to have been viewed with some displeasure by Sir Gilbert, who wrote his son several letters in a somewhat severe tone, on the instability of purpose and want of self-control displayed by him, in converting a journey to Vienna in search of military employment, into a pleasure-trip for the gratification of curiosity. Sir Gilbert was, however, subsequently much mollified by the distinction gained by his son during his short period of service with the Russian army.

Most unfortunately I can find no details of Russian, without leaving his seat, motioned to the King to take another.—*Wraxall's Memoirs*.

* Mr. Wroughton, afterwards Sir Thomas, and minister at Stockholm. It was said that in his youth he had been a favoured admirer of Catherine II., and was removed from Petersburg by the Grand Duke's desire.

this episode in his life, but allusions to some brilliant exploits of his, in a general action before Silistria, are frequent in the correspondence, and that the attention of the Russian commanders was attracted to him, is proved by his having been honourably mentioned by Marshal Romanzow in his despatches to his own government, and by a letter from the Marshal to Hugh himself.*

Mr. Wroughton, in a letter to the Earl of Suffolk (Secretary of State for the Northern Department), dated Warsaw, 29th July 1773, thus writes: "Field-Marshal Romanzow, in his relation" (to Count Stackelberg of a victory over the Grand Vizier) "speaks of Captain Elliot with uncommon praise, who, by all accounts from the army, has distinguished himself with a truly British courage; he is indeed a young man of extraordinary merit."

Sir Gilbert, writing to his son, mentions that the Russian Minister in London, M. Pouschkin,

* Since writing this I have seen a fourth edition of Tooke's *Life of Catherine the Second*, in which, after an account of a surprise of the Russian army at Giurgevo by the Turks in the campaign of 1773, the following passage occurs. "An Englishman named Elliot, in the service of Russia, distinguished himself in an extraordinary manner at Giurgevo. He sprang with no less agility than boldness over the heads and sabres of the Spahis, and fell into the river, which he crossed by swimming." A family tradition exists of his having joined a party of Cossacks on landing, who escorted him back to the camp; he running by the horses, holding on by the tails. Another story is alluded to in the family letters, which must have happened about this time, of a wonderfully rapid journey made by him (probably from the camp to Warsaw), all the authorities on the route vying with each other in expediting the traveller, who represented himself to be the husband of a Moldavian princess, flying back to her after a triumphant campaign.

had received a letter from Romanzow, in which he spoke of Hugh having highly distinguished himself; and Sir R. Gunning, Minister at Petersburg, reports that Romanzow's despatches to the Imperial Government contained very strong expressions to the same effect. Writing to Hugh himself,* Marshal Romanzow congratulates him on the distinction he had achieved, and goes on thus:—

“ Permettez que je vous parle à cette heure en Jassi, 13
Avril 1773. ami. Vous avez parfaitement soutenu l'idée que j'ai conçue de vous, que j'ai généralement de votre nation. Vous vous êtes exposé une fois, ne le faites plus. Conservez vos jours pour des exploits dignes d'un bon citoyen qui se doit à sa patrie. Peut-être aurais-je un jour la satisfaction d'admirer, à la tête de vos braves compatriotes, les talens que vous venez de déployer chez nous; et de me rappeler avec bien du contentement qu'en suivant votre penchant, vous vous êtes préparé à l'armée que j'ai l'honneur de commander, les voyes, qui vous conduiront par la suite dans le chemin de la gloire, dont vous avez, j'en suis convaincu, les plus justes notions.”

In a letter which Hugh addressed to the Marshal after his return to England, he ascribes his appointment as Minister to the Court of Munich, to the favourable impression which had been pro- London,
April 1774.

* From this letter it appears that Hugh had been serving with the division under Potemkin.

Potemkin, who was disliked and distrusted by Romanzow, was shortly afterwards sent to Petersburg with despatches, and was almost immediately installed in the post of favourite, for which time his power was scarcely less than that of the Empress herself.—*Life of Potemkin.*

duced on the King by the praises which Romanzow had bestowed upon him during his stay with the army, and he characteristically adds,—“Paraissez si j’ose regretter leurs effets, puisque le Roi a jugé qu’elles me rendaient dignes d’un avancement fort peu ordinaire dans ce pays à mon âge, quoique je me sens fort flatté de cette distinction, c’est avec bien de la peine que je me vois forcé de laisser partir seuls deux de mes compatriotes qui vont vous chercher aux bords du Danube.”

The first intimation of Lord Suffolk’s intention to admit him into the “foreign minister line” was given to his father in the spring of 1773, and is mentioned in a letter addressed to Hugh at Warsaw. From this time Sir Gilbert naturally became most impatient for his son’s return to England, which, however, did not take place till the autumn of the year. On the 27th September 1773, Sir Gilbert wrote to Hugh that he was appointed plenipotentiary at Munich in Bavaria, with a salary of £5 per diem,* though his immediate predecessor had been reduced to £3, a sum manifestly inadequate to the expenses of a foreign minister, however economical he might be.

Though he was aware of his destination so early as September 1773, it appears that his appointment was not officially made until the

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* This is a mistake. Lord Suffolk, when making the appointment, expressed his intention of raising the salary from £3 to £5 per diem, and did not apprehend there would be any difficulty in so doing, but from subsequent letters I find that no such alteration was made, and the salary remained as it had been in M. de Vismes’ time. Mr. Harris at Berlin had £1500 a year, and spent, it was said, £3000.

spring of the following year. It bears the date of 29th April 1774.

From the allusions which are made to this period in the subsequent correspondence with his family, I imagine the winter to have been spent by them all in London, and that Hugh took his full share of the amusements of the day. His *maccaronism* seems to have been a subject of jest among his friends, and his fun and his "flames," his adventures and masquerades, and his attendance at Ranelagh, are frequently referred to in his sister's letters.

The feelings with which Hugh set out on his new career may be guessed at by his letter to Marshal Romanzow. In announcing his appointment to a friend, he goes on:—"The only thing that consoles me is," etc., and he probably shared fully in the sentiments of disapprobation which were excited among his quondam comrades by the announcement of his new profession. "Comment," writes to him Lieutenant-Colonel Petersohn,* from Koutschouk Cainardgi, 25th July 1774, "vous désertez les drapeaux de Mars et vous rentrez sous le joug de la politique? Mais ce sont des contes! Eh quoi! cet Elliot aimable, sociable, léger, étourdi, galant, petit maître, consent à s'enfermer dans le fond des cabinets! mais c'est un larcin fait à la société! Cela me confond dans mes idées. Quoi le vif et léger Elliot, va donc prendre sur soi l'air sombre et fléquatique d'un ministre, après ce phénomène je ne désespère pas un jour de voir le Pape habillé en husard."

* Colonel Petersohn, *chargé-d'affaires* of the Russian Court.

On his way to Munich, Hugh made some stay in Paris, where the political changes which followed on the accession of Louis XVI. gave him matter for some interesting communications to his Government.

His first despatch from Munich is dated 23d June 1774.

There was at that time little or no business of any interest depending between the Courts of Munich and of London.* The questions which occupy the chief portions of my grandfather's official correspondence relate to matters which affected the German Empire and the King of Great Britain in his electoral capacity; perhaps for that very reason they were all the more interesting to the King, whose cordial approval of the young Minister's despatches was frequently signified through Lord Suffolk in public and private letters.

It appears to me, as far as I am able to judge, that though no important events occurred to call forth the manifestation of superior abilities in him during his residence at Munich, nevertheless he did shew, from his first entrance into public life, considerable tact and unusual decision of character. A rapid penetration into men's motives, and a readiness in availing himself of the knowledge he had gained, were evidently

* The Seven Years' War was just concluded. Austria and Prussia, however, continued to be rivals for power within the Germanic Empire, while France was suspected of a design to check the ambitious views of both, by instigating an alliance of the secondary German powers. The duty of an English minister consisted in watching the progress of their various intrigues.

characteristics of his mind; and on one occasion they were conspicuously shewn, when, in conducting a delicate negotiation with the Electoral Court, having reason to suspect that the Bavarian ministry were influenced by Austrian intrigues,* he spiritedly refused to transact the business through them, and in a personal interview with the Elector, took on himself the responsibility of urging a policy on that Prince which, as being adverse to the interests of the House of Austria, was viewed with ill-will by the minister, Count Seinsheim, whose sympathies were known to be Austrian.

At the period of my grandfather's arrival in Bavaria, nothing could exceed the gaiety of the Court, or the poverty and misery of the people.

In an official letter to Mr. Eden, 10th September 1774, he writes:—"To draw any picture of the state of this country would be to go back two ages in the progress of society. They are in nothing on a par with the rest of Europe, except in music and debauchery. . . . That you may judge of the universal ignorance that overspreads this country, I shall only give you two anecdotes which have fallen under my own observation. The trial by torture is the ordinary method, in this Electorate, of convicting criminals. Some time since, three poor fellows, after having been by this means forced to a confession, suffered capital punishment. A few days afterwards, their innocence was proved by the capture

* Relating to the succession to the Duchy of Saxe-Lunenbourg, in which the Hanoverian and Bavarian interests were opposed.

of the really guilty parties. An Englishman who happened to be here at the time, expressed his surprise that so cruel a catastrophe should have occurred under the generally mild government of the Elector; this remark had like to have provoked a discussion, to avoid which the Englishman said that this point was much better treated of in a chapter in *L'Esprit des Loix*, than by anything he could say on the subject. Our Premier, with whom he was speaking, repeated several times the word *esprit*, on which the Englishman asked him if he had not read it. He said he believed it was among the number of books which the Pope had, considering his situation, given him a dispensation to read, but that, for his part, il n'aimait pas les *esprits forts*.

"Speaking lately with the President of Finances of the calamities occasioned by the late famine, and of the various plans proposed for avoiding the recurrence of such misfortunes, he said that in other countries precautions might be necessary, but in this, in case of a want of grain, they had an easy resource in the course of the Danube, by which they could always send off numbers of people on a short warning, and that they had already experienced the advantage of this method of getting rid of the superfluous mouths in the last famine, when many thousands went to live in the Austrian dominions. To this ingenious plan is owing the present unpopulousness of this once peopled country. I am told the Austrians have now in their service enough of Bavarian subjects to conquer the whole Electorate."

Mr. Liston,* writing to Lady Elliot a few months after their arrival at Munich, tells her, "that several of our people of fashion and men of letters are still employed in search of the philosopher's stone,† and Mr. Elliot has almost drawn a challenge on himself, by venturing to doubt that burning the hand with St. Hubert's key was an infallible cure for the bite of a mad dog."

Miracles, too, were rife in Bavaria, and the young *protégé* of Hume and of Madame du Defand must have had some difficulty in listening with patience to the feats of a certain Gassner, who, under the protection of the Bishop of Ratisbon, undertook to exorcise devils for the benefit of the Electorate.‡ He was said to have expelled legions of evil spirits from the poorer orders; and, to judge by the descriptions of Munich society, it is much to be feared that the fiends must have taken refuge with the higher!

The Court at that time consisted of the Elector and Electress, who were childless (the question of the Bavarian succession loomed already in the distance); of the Electress of Saxony, sister of the Elector of Bavaria, and daughter of the Emperor Charles the Seventh; of the Elector Palatine and his wife, who, like the Electress of Saxony, were only occasional though frequent

* Mr. Liston had accompanied my grandfather to Munich in the capacity of private secretary.

† Wraxall in 1779, found the Viennese nobility engaged in the same search.—See his *Memoirs of the Court of Berlin*, etc., vol. ii.

‡ See account in Wraxall's *Memoirs of the Court of Berlin*, etc.

visitors to Munich ; and of the Prince of Deux-Ponts,* who claimed to be in the Bavarian succession after the death of the Elector Palatine, the immediate heir of the Elector of Bavaria, but who, like him, was childless. An old Margravine of Baden completed the circle of royalties, and her death followed the arrival of my grandfather within the year, and was thus notified to him by a fair maid of honour, whose letters are among his correspondence :—" La pauvre Margravine se meurt d'une hydropisie, et cela pour une pudeur mal placée, ne voulant montrer ses jambes qui étaient enflées. Grands Dieux ! où la pudeur va-t-elle se placer !"

The Elector, an agreeable and accomplished, though weak man, seems at once to have been propitiated by my grandfather's pleasing appearance and manners, and to have made him his frequent companion in his hunting and shooting expeditions. The Electress, of whom we hear little, except that she had the unfortunate habit of winking her eyes in moments of unusual emotion, was surrounded by a bevy of fair ladies, among whom Madame Daun,† the correspondent already alluded to, and the "black-eyed Salerne," were the most admired.

The other chief personages, whose names or letters will be found of frequent occurrence in the

* Prince Maximilian of Deux-Ponts, frequently mentioned in the letters, became King of Bavaria by the name of Maximilian I. He was godfather to my uncle of the same name.

† This lady, though unmarried, had brevet rank in virtue of her appointment at Court. Her letters are signed *Delta*.

correspondence, are the Prime Minister, Count Seinsheim; the Austrian Minister, Count Hartig, "a little decrepit man," who is described as constantly pushing forward to attract the Elector's attention, while the latter coolly talked over his head to my grandfather, to the great amusement of the Court; M. de Folard, the French Minister; Baron Sarny, the confidential counsellor of the Elector; and to these we may add the Preisings, Torrings, Bercheims, and others, all leading members of the Bavarian nobility. Madame de Tarring-Seefeld enjoyed the unquestionable dishonour of representing Madame de Montespan at a court which boasted to be a Versailles in miniature; and to prove that French sentiments on such subjects were in the ascendant, I need only quote a curious phrase in a note of *Delta's* to my grandfather:—"Notre pauvre Adelaïde" (Madame de Tarring-Seefeld) "continue toujours malade, et l'on parle même en ville de choses qui me percent le cœur et qui me rendent triste. On dit qu'elle devrait se retirer; elle n'est ma foi, pas encore d'âge à cela." The scene of the chief pleasures of the Court was Nymphenburg, a country palace of the Elector's which Pöllnitz describes in his letters as a *lieu enchanté*; gardens, waters, woods, hunting-grounds, diversified its delights. Three times a week during the summer the Electress held a court there, when tables for play were prepared in the galleries, while, for those who preferred them, gilded gondolas floated on the lake, and pony phaetons driven by a "cavalier," were at the orders of the

ladies who chose a moonlight drive through the woods. A supper, to which all foreigners were admitted, closed the entertainment. In Munich itself, the amusements were not fewer:—"La Cour de Bavière est, sans contredit," says Pöllnitz, "la plus galante et la plus polie de l'Allemagne. Nous y avons Comédie Française,* bal, et jeu tous les jours. Il y a trois fois par semaine concert, tout le monde y assiste masqué; après le concert on joue et l'on danse. Ces assemblées publiques, où l'Electeur et toute sa cour assistent, sont d'un grand revenu pour les valets-de-chambre de l'Electeur; car outre que chacun paye à l'entrée, ils ont aussi l'argent des cartes, et ils sont intéressés dans presque toutes les banques. De sorte que ces domestiques ont presque tout l'argent de la noblesse."† Mr. Liston, too, speaks of similar expenses at Nymphenburg as being very heavy.

Munich,
November 8,
1774.

Such were the scenes, and such the *dramatis personæ* to which the young diplomatist was introduced in the summer of 1774, at the early age of twenty-two. The accounts of his presentation at Court are amusingly contrasted in his own and Mr. Liston's letters. "Le bon Liston," as he is frequently called by Hugh's foreign correspon-

* In 1774 they had an opera too, for on the 17th January of that year my grandfather writes that he is just "come home from hearing an Opera Buffa composed by the famous Mozart, whom you may remember when only eight years old in England. He is now *maitre de chapelle* to the Bishop of Salzburg, and receives about three guineas a month salary. I never felt the power of music before, but am now a convert, and have already begun to play upon the flute."

† *Lettres du Baron Pollnitz*, tom. i. p. 328.

dents, gives a somewhat pompous description of the ceremony; of the dignity and grace of the Minister, which put the royalties themselves out of countenance, while the poor Electress took to opening and shutting one of her eyes "with the quick involuntary motion" which "invariably betrays her embarrassment :"—of the extravagant praises of the ladies of the Court, and the open envy of the Austrian envoy; and last, not least, of the "bare-faced advances" and "masculine attacks" made on him by the fair sex in general, winding up thus;—"What I admire the most is, that he has contrived not to make enemies of those he has refused, a point which is surely not to be managed without difficulty." There certainly does not appear to have been much scope for romance at the Court of Munich, and perhaps it was lucky for my grandfather that, as he himself says, "there is not one good-looking woman in this town, by good fortune, for I should be in great danger of learning to talk *en Pastor Fido*, such is the style of this country."

His letter to his mother, written after his presentation to the Electoral family, is full of boyish fun :—"I made my speech and bows with becoming gravity, and did not once lose command of my upper lip, which I find sometimes apt to betray the mournful composure to which I can now at command bring the rest of my face." On leaving the presence of the Electress a terrible dilemma presented itself, how to retreat without turning his back on the courtly circle; happily the terpsichorean instructions of M. Gallini rushed

on his mind, and a neatly-executed *pirouette* extracted him from the difficulty "in a manner which could not have wounded the susceptibilities of the most sensitive *Frau* in the empire."

And so he began his new life,—“youth at the prow, and pleasure at the helm;” but by the spring of 1775 clouds were appearing on the horizon; dissatisfaction with the tedious frivolity of the society, disgust with the “venal creatures” who preyed upon the Court, and daily-increasing money difficulties, contributed to give a tone of gloom to his mind. The most cheerful feature of the time consisted in the occasional presence of young English travellers, who, amid much folly and vice, were not wholly unmindful of better things. Among those the most conspicuous were Mr. Pitt,* one of my grandfather’s constant correspondents; Mr. Stanley,† a son of Lord Derby’s; Mr. Bagnall, of whose romantic passion for a fair Bavarian, Delta writes as follows:—“Il est devant une jolie femme comme en présence d’une laide Impératrice,—c’est bien Anglais;” and Lord Lindsay,‡ who was travelling with Mr. Brydone. Mr. Brydone, Mr. Pitt, and my grandfather, in their subsequent correspondence, frequently allude to a scheme which appears to have originated with my grandfather, and of which the object was the formation of a society of patriotic men. “I mean,” writes Mr. Pitt, “of true patriotic men—

* William Morton Pitt, afterwards M.P. for Dorsetshire.

† Mr. Stanley died in 1779.

‡ Eldest son of the Duke of Ancaster, succeeded his father, and died in 1777.

not such as the word now means—who should unite to carry on good schemes during their whole lives.”* “How many hours we have spent in discussing the plan,” he writes on another occasion, and how infinitely superior to the society in which they lived did such discussions make them! All glory to English influences which, in the midst of idle dissipation, can still suffice to raise ennobling aspirations. To borrow a phrase of South’s, “leaning on hope’s anchor, they did not stick it in the mud,” but looked on from present follies and failures to future years of useful life at home.

Dreaming patriots, and black-eyed maids of honour, what fate was yours? Did the beguiling phantoms of your youth become the haunting ghosts of after years? I know not; but to one of them life was checkered henceforth with joy and sorrow, with failure and success, in a greater degree than common, and time floated him rapidly away from the sheltered scenes of youth.

It seems to have been the misfortune of my grandfather’s temperament, and one which was strengthened by circumstances, that fits of energy and of high aspiration were rapidly succeeded by depression and *ennui*. With romantic notions of honour, he combined habits of carelessness and

* One of those schemes appears to have been for the emancipation of the Roman Catholics. A great impression had been produced in those young Englishmen by the sight of the numbers of their countrymen who, with English hearts, were serving in foreign armies. Mr. Pitt mentions that four hundred English officers belonging to the Austrian army had been presented in one day to the Duke of Gloucester, then travelling abroad. Many of those brave men were affected to tears.

irregularity, and a facility of disposition which could not fail to bring his affairs into disorder; with a peculiarly sensitive and imaginative mind, he was placed by circumstances in a society which ignored every species of delicacy; with intellectual tastes, his life led him among singularly uncultivated minds. And these contradictions of temperament and of conditions were not overruled, as they might have been, by a determined will. There was in him a certain indolence and instability of character which made performance ever lag behind promise; liking display but hating restraints; doing as others did with a dissatisfied consciousness that he should have done better; loving keenly his absent friends, but alienating them by unpunctuality or neglect in his correspondence; morbidly brooding over disappointments, while forgetful of the singular good fortune of his career—his letters at this period give one the feeling of a character that was out of joint.

Early in
1775.

To an application which he made for leave, for the purpose of setting his affairs in order, Lord Suffolk returned a most kind and friendly refusal. Nevertheless, on the score of ill-health, he did shortly after absent himself from his post, and placed himself under the treatment of a celebrated quack doctor at Berne, M. Shuppach.*

That the reasons for this journey were chiefly connected with money matters, is proved by the

* Shuppach was a Swiss peasant of small learning, but "with fifty years' experience of the practice of medicine," during which he had discovered the effect of many herbs, and was supposed to have been successful in the treatment of various diseases.

fact of his assuming a false name, that of Mr. Thomas Bellamy.

From his boyish days, Hugh seems to have been careless and extravagant in his habits. From Warsaw, when setting out for Constantinople, he wrote to his father thus: "As I am living on my patrimony now, I must live on nothing hereafter;" a communication to which his father might have replied, like the man in a French play, "*L'air, Monsieur, est un fort sot aliment.*" But no previous difficulties had approached in gravity to those which he was now obliged to confess to his family, and Sir Gilbert's letters to his son are both severe and affecting. In one of them he expatiates on the mortification he had experienced in abandoning some intended improvements at Minto—a step which the demands made upon him by his sons had obliged him to take. In another letter he says, with admirable good sense, "We may certainly live happy in great poverty, but in modern Europe one cannot act in any public situation without great fortune or unrelenting economy."

It does not appear from the correspondence that the embarrassments my grandfather had to contend with were attributable to any other cause than carelessness in his general habits. At a period when the leading young men of his country were confirmed gamblers, he seems to have had no taste for play, though living at a place where it formed the staple amusement. He no doubt did play, and may have lost more than he could afford, but of serious debts incurred on this

account, there are no traces. The unfavourable reports of his manner of life which seem to have reached his friends in England at this time, are by them referred to two heads: 1st, Expensive habits and a taste for show; 2^d, An undisguised contempt for the society in which he lived. To these accusations Mr. Liston replied in detail.* The first charge he dismissed at once, by the statement that from the moment my grandfather had perceived the inadequacy of his means to support the ministerial dignity, according to the notions he conceived of it, he had manfully entered on a system of economy and retrenchment. The second charge was not to be so lightly disposed of. "I wish the dislike were more owing to *maccaronism* than it really is. That affectation would soon wear off, while the uncommon delicacy he feels with regard to characters and manners is likely to attend him through life. He has indeed too much good sense, and is much too well bred to discover the least symptoms of disapprobation to the persons concerned; but it is difficult to reject the addresses of almost every woman in the place, without giving offence to some, and his dislike to the society in general is betrayed by a constant preference of English men, English ideas, and English things. He has, however, really much regard for the Elector, the French Minister, and

* Some of the unavoidable expenses of a foreign minister are described as very large. At Munich, he was expected to fee every officer of the Elector's household on his introduction at Court; to be driven in a coach and four when accompanying the Elector to his country seats; and to pay largely when mounted on the Elector's horses.

some others." Mr Liston's letters* at this time not only throw much light on my grandfather's life, but prove the writer of them to have been a wise and kind friend, and a judicious adviser.

It appears in those days the *personnel* of a mission at one of the minor Courts was confined to the minister himself. Mr. Liston, who acted as Mr. Elliot's secretary, went out with him in an unofficial capacity,† and during this very year, 1775, he had to consider the eligibility of accepting a professorship at Edinburgh, which, however, he rejected for the sake of remaining near my grandfather. During the latter's frequent absences from his post, Mr. Liston was from time to time called on to correspond with the Foreign Office, and he was at last regularly admitted into the diplomatic body as *chargé d'affaires*.

Mr. de Vismes, Mr. Elliot's predecessor at the Court of Munich, had no secretary, "contenting himself with a boy, who understood no language but his own, merely to copy for him."

To return from this digression to my grandfather's concerns. Having spoken of the weaknesses to which his money difficulties were in part attributable, it must not be overlooked that his virtues also led him into acts of prodigality which prudence condemned. "Have you," says Mr. de Vismes, writing from Stockholm, "discovered a

* In these letters, Hugh Elliot is named under the disguise of the Prince of Monaco.

† Among my grandfather's papers is a letter of introduction to a gentleman who had officiated as tutor to the sons of "Mr. Penn, the proprietor of Pennsylvania," and who was now anxious to be employed as secretary, or in some similar capacity.

gold deposit, that you think yourself justified in giving a hundred louis to Madame Sarny?"

Madame Sarny was the widow of the Elector's most confidential and favourite adviser, Baron Sarny, who in his lifetime had been of signal use to my grandfather, both by showing him personal kindness, and by furthering English views of policy in opposition to those of Austria. He had died suddenly, leaving his widow in circumstances of great distress, from which no one but my grandfather shewed any readiness to relieve her. In a grateful letter, which she addressed to him at this time, she wrote: "The Elector has been with me, and is very kind, but he did not say anything of assisting me."

Shortly "after Mr. Elliot's arrival at Munich, a circumstance occurred which attracted general attention to him. During a violent thunderstorm, the lightning set fire to a village in sight of the Palace of Nymphenburg, where the Court then was. While the courtiers were crossing themselves, and praying that the next bolt might not strike the palace, Mr. Elliot hurried out of the drawing-room, and ran through the storm to the village. Arrived there, he found the people panic-stricken, and instantly set them an example of courage and activity, by going to the assistance of those belonging to the burning house, at the same time putting his purse, in which there were from ten to fifteen guineas, in the hands of one of the sufferers."*

To his servants my grandfather was indulgent

* Letter from Mr. Liston to Lady Elliot.

to a fault; and the *fourberies* of a certain valet, La Coste, who had his prototypes in the Scapins of French comedy, are frequently alluded to in the correspondence.

The early part of 1775 found the young diplomatist rusticating in Switzerland.* How he passed his time there is not told us; but from a letter of Madame de Thun's, it seems that he had written to her in higher praise of the scenery of the country than of its *passionless* and apathetic inhabitants, for she writes thus in reply:—

. . . "Je n'aime pas à me persuader '*que l'homme dégénère quand il n'est que laborieux, frugal, et sans passions,*' il me paraît si difficile de bien diriger ces dernières que je n'aime pas à me convaincre qu'elles sont absolument nécessaires pour élever l'âme. . . . Je ne saurais m'empêcher de croire que le peuple sans passions sera

Luxem-
bourg,
24 Août
1775.

* During Mr. Elliot's absence from his post, Sir R. Keith passed through Munich, and visited many of its *lions* in company with Mr. Liston. "On Friday," writes Mr. Liston, 16th April 1775, "we saw the ordinary procession of the day, which is sufficiently ridiculous. Sir R. was much amused with the idea of Seefield's acting *le bon Dieu* on this occasion, which he did as usual. We spent that afternoon in the gardens of Nymphenburg. On our return to town we went and saw the procession of the Slaves of Virtue. It consists of the Electresses, the Dames des Clefs and Dames de Cour, and some of the nobility (of these last were Madame Max Preising, the Berchem, and half a dozen more), followed by a dozen of poor girls, who are educated at the Electress's expense. They visited all the churches and chapels in town, and some on foot from three o'clock till near eight. The dress gives them the look of nuns, but it is white and handsome, and serves rather to set them off than otherwise. I observed that your good friend the Daun, not to mention others, had thought a little rouge would give relief to her charms, the Daun especially was plastered up to the eyes."

le plus heureux et contribuera davantage à la tranquillité générale." And then she adds with some *malice*, "Si vos provinciaux en Amérique, par exemple, étaient comme les Suisses des montagnes, ils vous donneraient bien moins de besogne aujourd'hui. . . . Vous conviendrez avec moi que s'ils n'étaient que frugal, laborieux, et sans passions, ils se seraient laissés imposer les lois par l'Angleterre, qui n'étant point onéreuse ne peuvent choquer que leur passion de l'indépendance.

"Je vous demande mille pardons. J'étais Bostonienne de cœur. Je le suis un peu moins à présent ; cependant j'ai toutes les peines du monde à me rendre bonne Anglaise dans cette occasion."

The Austrian fine ladies were like their sisters of Paris, "*Bostoniennes* de cœur ;" but a few more years of the reign of the reforming Emperor Joseph, and a few more steps taken in the direction of Revolution in France, sufficed to change the current of their sympathies.

5. The pleasantest feature in the family correspondence at this date is the delight with which all hail the successful *début* of Gilbert Elliot at the bar. Every letter from home dilates upon it, and Hugh's answers are full of joy and affection. Lady Elliot tells it very characteristically to Mr. Liston, in a letter which he describes as filling thirteen pages, "beautifully written."

"I know," she says, "the pleasure it will give you to learn the success my son has had in his first appearance in his profession. He has given a rare instance of resolution in withdrawing himself from the pursuits of the world to those of the

most persevering study. When it came to the point, you may believe I had much trepidation, although I had always comforted myself that if he failed in this, it would be the first thing that ever he failed in that he attempted in his life; yet, as I had so seldom heard him speak, I had some degree of doubt of the rapidity of his tongue and the strength of his voice. But I was soon relieved with a note from Sir John Dalrymple, saying, '*Thanks to the Gods! the boy has done his duty;*' to which was added, '*The De'il a fears o' him;*' to which I answered, *Son of Æmilius, and thy cousin, Paulus, he must do more, and by the Gods he will!* He is now deemed a counsel learned in the law. He is greatly encouraged by his success, and firmly rooted in the ground on which his ancestors on both sides flourished."

Money matters having been arranged, and his health re-established, my grandfather returned to Bavaria in the course of June or July; and, except during short intervals, he remained there until he finally left the country in the autumn of the following year.

For economical reasons, and perhaps partly too in indulgence of a morbid dislike to society, the life which he now entered upon at Ratisbon* was one of such extreme seclusion as to cause much remark and censure among his friends.† The

December
1775.

* He was accredited to the Diet at Ratisbon as representative of the Elector of Hanover.

† "I am here," he wrote to his father, "in an inferior position, which requires neither show nor expense. I am master of every minute in the day. . . . That I might be still less liable to interruption, I have taken a small house upon an island in the

economical views which justified it were probably those which he was most anxious to conceal from the public, and, with his usual heedlessness of the opinion of the society in which he lived, he did not, by disguising that he despised it, seek to avoid giving offence. Several of his correspondents at this time condemn his universal scepticism. "You are too hard on the fair sex," says one. "I had rather not be so clear-sighted as to men's motives," says another. It was a phase of feeling which most men pass through. Self-deceived even more than deceived by others, they have still to learn that life will reflect their own image—"as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."

While a young man does not pay his debts, all men are rogues to him; while he makes love to twenty women, the faithlessness of the sex will be his favourite theme.

His retirement at Ratisbon provoked two excellent letters from Countess Thun.

Vienna,
October
1775.

"Je suis résolue de vous gronder, et cela tout de bon. Allons, justifiez vous. Vivez-vous comme un ours? pourquoi fuyez-vous le monde?

Danube, where I am fed by the woman it belongs to, without trouble to myself, and at a moderate price. I have already begun the course which I intend to follow as long as I remain here. I rise early, about six; till breakfast I do any business that is necessary. The whole morning till two I am employed in reading, chiefly a plan of study as an introduction to this line, which Lord Stormont gave me at Paris. . . . From two to three I make a solitary dinner. From three to five I have German and fencing masters, and then I walk, ride, or drive about the hills and woods that surround us till dusk, when I go into the Danube; and after that I walk about my island, and am often with you and my family."—13th August 1775.

pourquoi vivez-vous comme une taupe dans un trou? Pourquoi maltraitez-vous les femmes? que vous ont elles donc faits ces pauvres femmes? vous ne les haissiez pas trop autrefois! Pourquoi cachez-vous les talens que le ciel vous a donnés; et enfin, pourquoi n'êtes-vous plus cet aimable garçon d'autrefois? Si c'est humeur, il ne faut pas se la passer; si c'est mélancholie, il faut faire un effort pour s'en tirer; si c'est chagrin, il faut se dissiper; si c'est une passion tendre, c'est trop fi! je ne veux pas seulement le croire, il faut une raison plus essentielle et plus sérieuse pour un changement comme celui-là."

My grandfather must have replied to this letter by a statement of the pecuniary difficulties which had made it incumbent on him to withdraw from the expenses of society, for, in a letter dated December 14, 1775, after congratulating herself on having drawn from him a confidence so honourable to himself, she proceeds to give him some excellent advice on the necessity of making his system of economy compatible with the other requirements of his daily life, since "le moyen d'une retraite absolue" is not always within one's power, though no doubt more agreeable to a young man's humour than a constant carefulness in the management of his expenses.

To his misanthropical objections to society, she also replies with no less good sense:

"Je ne prétends pas que vous voyiez le monde avec les mêmes yeux dont vous l'avez vu avant de le connaître,—il est impossible d'être longtemps la dupe de son néant. . . . Mais que diriez-vous

Countess
Thun,
Vienna,
1775

d'un acteur qui se trouvant sur la scène s'occuperait de l'illusion au lieu de remplir son esprit et son cœur de son rôle? Chacun se doit à soi-même et aux autres de jouer son rôle de son mieux tant qu'il est sur la scène, . . . Rien n'est plus dangereux pour un jeune homme avec votre esprit, votre cœur et vos talens, que ce système d'indifférence. Il l'est d'autant plus, que vous sentant par l'élévation de vos sentimens, et par le mépris de ce qui fait l'objet des désirs du commun des hommes, au-dessus du reste de l'humanité, vous ne vous en défiez pas!

“Quand on ne trouve rien dans ce globe digne de la peine de l'estreindre, quand on raisonne lorsqu'on devrait agir, quand on laisse éteindre ses passions plutôt que de les diriger, et qu'alors on manque de l'aiguillon que la Nature nous a donné pour nous faire agir, on reste dans une inaction qui finit par nous rendre coupable. Et c'est là où vos raisonnemens vous conduiront insensiblement. Je suis de votre avis qu'un homme qui se sacrifie au désir de se faire une réputation est bien la dupe; mais je crois aussi qu'il y a une sorte d'ambition qu'il ne faut jamais laisser éteindre en soi,—celle d'être utile à ses semblables. Ce but là est grand par soi-même, et mérite bien la peine de s'en occuper. Quand aux femmes, vous pensez bien que je ne vous en parlerai pas sérieusement. J'en demande pardon à mon sexe, mais j'aime bien mieux qu'on ne parle à aucune que de s'occuper uniquement de toutes. Je ne connais rien dans la nature plus méprisable qu'un homme qui en fait son unique affaire.”

Of an indifference to fame, or an unreadiness to seek it in active exertion, my grandfather could not be accused ; his mistake lay in supposing that he could only usefully serve his country in one way, and that way one which was not open to him. Either while in Switzerland, or soon after his return to Germany, he had communicated privately to Lord Suffolk his ardent desire to join the army in America as a volunteer.

Believing that his knowledge of foreign languages and of foreign armies, might make him useful in acting with the foreign contingent, he begged that if his services could be made available, he might on any terms rejoin his old profession.

Lord Suffolk's answer is most kind.

"The personal activity with which you are eager to support the cause of Great Britain, does you the greatest honour, and I must request you not to think me insensible to the spirit which animates you on this occasion, if I attempt to check the zeal of it at present, and advise you to defer, at least, the execution of the ideas it has suggested. I don't say that the time may not come when such an example as you propose may be of essential service ; if it should, I will join with you in laying aside all other considerations, and recommend it to you to set it. But at this moment I should not act with the regard I feel for you if I did not dissuade you from quitting the walk you are in, in which you do so well, and are so likely to be advanced."

Private,
August 1775.

In the following spring my grandfather again repeated his desire to join the army, and was

again with equal kindness dissuaded from doing so by Lord Suffolk. By this time, however, his intentions and wishes had reached his family, and had naturally excited their warm opposition, and apparently the matter soon afterwards dropped.

Sir Gilbert's letters on the subject shew more impatience of his son's Quixotism than of sympathy with his feelings. His mother warns him that the cause of his country would not be much advanced by his losing an arm or a leg; while Mr. Eden,* already a friend, and soon to become a relation, writes as follows:—

“I fully feel with you that the period is come when the noble enthusiasm of individuals in the Old World, is the only weapon that can be brandished with success against the mad multitude of the New, but your father sees and thinks that there are spirited Britons enough still left to answer the national purposes, without his hazarding a son who has too fair a prospect in his present line of life to turn from it without some more pressing exigency than yet exists.”

The mania of volunteering for the army appears to have seized at the same moment upon all the young Englishmen who had spent the winter of 1774 or 1775 at Munich together. One of them, Mr. Stanley,† did accompany his uncle, General Burgoyne, to America; the rest

* William Eden, Esq., Private Secretary to Lord Suffolk. He married, in the autumn of 1776, Eleanor Elliot, Hugh's youngest sister, and in 1789 was created Lord Auckland.

† Lady Charlotte Stanley had married General Burgoyne against the wishes of her own family.

were obliged by their families to content themselves with vain aspirations after "distinctions to be earned on Bunker's Hill."

Lord Lindsay, the only son of the Duke of Ancaster, then travelling under the charge of Mr. Brydone, was one of those most bent on volunteering for the army. He was prevented from doing so by the commands of his father and the tears of his mother; while Hugh Elliot, who was supposed to have inoculated him with the obnoxious idea, was reproached bitterly by his own family for having countenanced so wild and senseless a plan. The parents of Lord Lindsay might have seen cause to reconsider their determination could they have read the letters written about their son by his mentor and companions at this time. That an active profession was the only chance of saving him from a wasted and disgraceful life was an opinion shared by all.

Madame de Thun, who had become acquainted with Lord Lindsay at Vienna, prays that when her son grows up, she may not be so blind to his real interest as "*cette pauvre Duchesse*." Mr. Brydone, in one of several letters from Vienna, ¹⁷⁷⁶ thanks my grandfather for having inspired Lord Lindsay with some of that "generous and noble patriotic zeal which you alone seem capable of communicating to all who converse with you. . . . Till he had the good fortune to meet with you, I always dreaded that pleasure would have been the only pursuit of his life; you have convinced him of the extreme insipidity and contemptibleness of such a character."

Madame de Thun's wise advice had fallen on good ground, and was bringing forth fruit.

The summer of 1776 was probably the most agreeable which my grandfather had passed since his arrival in Germany. At Ratisbon he became intimate with a coterie of pleasant people, of whom the Count * and Countess Neipperg formed the centre. Count Neipperg represented Bohemia in the Diet; he was afterwards, for many years, Austrian Minister at Naples, and was well known as a cultivated, agreeable man; his wife young, pretty, and, by all accounts, of most engaging manners, was supposed by the fair ladies of Ratisbon to have some share in drawing forth "le sauvage Elliot" from his retirement. However that may have been, he became the life and soul of *the set*. Many pleasant meetings took place at the Neippergs' country-house at Stauff; and, when these were over, and my grandfather was recalled to England, "in order," as Lord Suffolk wrote to him privately, "that he might be intrusted with affairs of greater importance, his Majesty having been so well satisfied with his previous conduct," we learn much of the regrets his absence caused, from the letters of Mr. Liston, and of the Marquis Louis d'Yve, a near relation of the Neippergs, and not an unfrequent correspondent of my grandfather in after years.

* His sister was the celebrated Princess of Auersperg, who, for many years, was the object of the devotions of the late Emperor Francis; the last act of his life had been to give her a draft on the Royal Treasury for 20,000 francs; the first act of Maria Theresa's widowhood was to confirm it.

Mr. Liston, who, from being tutor, secretary, and adviser, had now become the confidant of a sentimental correspondence, writes with most amusing distress to the volatile Minister, of the difficulty he had in inventing probable excuses for his chief, when post after post arrived without any letters for a certain lady; while, on the contrary, *hers* were so heavy and frequent, that Mr. Liston was obliged to take them out of their covers, "though, on my honour, I don't read a word," and, even then, the postage was ruinous!

Again, the lady *would* learn English, and *ce bon* Liston was made to undertake the part of instructor. "I should not so much mind," said he, "if the husband" (who was a literary character) "were not always present, puzzling me with questions about grammar."

On one occasion an archery *fête* was held at Stauff, and, as a delicate compliment to England, the target was made to represent an American, "revêtu de toutes les marques distinctives dont vos ennemis se sont décorés," and the fair Countess herself had the good fortune to knock down the head, a feat which afforded no small pleasure to her, and some amusement to her guests. The scene was retailed in a letter by Mr. Liston to my grandfather, and, he adds, "they overwhelm me with the most flattering distinctions, which, however, lead me into many expenses." Poor Mr. Liston! neither loving nor beloved, his place was no sinecure. He had to remonstrate, to moderate, to excuse, to write, to teach, and to pay! Whatever scrapes his chief got into, *il* *lais-*

sait rédiger les pièces justificatives by his secretary!

Thus, towards the end of the summer of 1766, my grandfather's first mission came to an end, and Mr. Morton Eden "reigned in his stead;" the latter made his *début* at Munich with great success, the people pronounced him "*engel-schön*," and the *dames de cour* smiled graciously on one who promised to be less indifferent to their charms than his predecessor had been.

I wish, for the sake of my grandfather's reputation for politeness, I could have ended this chapter of his history without mentioning a trait which is, however, too characteristic to be omitted. "How could you," says his friend Mr. Pitt, writing to him some time afterwards, "think yourself justified in telling your Munich friends that the day of your departure was the happiest of your life? Was it not unnecessary to make a round of visits for that purpose?"

NOTE.—On his way through Paris my grandfather visited Madame du Deffand, and thus she writes of him to Horace Walpole:—"Le petit Elliot est tout-à-fait aimable; il a beaucoup d'esprit, il sent encore un peu l'école, mais c'est qu'il est modeste, et qu'il est la contre partie de Charles Fox; la sorte de timidité qu'il a encore sied bien à son âge; surtout quand elle n'empêche pas qu'on en démêle le bon sens et l'esprit."—*Corres. de Madame du Deffand.*



CHAPTER THE SECOND.

1772 to 1779.

THE FAMILY.

I HAVE now brought down the narrative of my grandfather's early life to the period of his return to England, and the close of his first mission, in the autumn of 1776, and in doing so I have confined myself solely to that portion of his correspondence which bears directly upon his affairs. It will therefore be desirable, before going any further, to cast a backward glance over the other portion of the letters now before me,—that which relates to the circumstances of his correspondents. An additional reason for doing so, before entering on another year, consists in the changes which occurred in the family in the early part of 1777, and which amounted to a break-up of the family home.

When, in 1771, Hugh “tore himself from his mother's arms,” as she expresses it, “to seek honourable employment in a foreign land,” the family group had already lost one of its members

by the departure of Alick for India, which had taken place some time before; but there still remained under the paternal roof-tree two sons and two daughters. Gilbert, the eldest, was pursuing his studies at Oxford. Bob was a Westminster school-boy. Isabella, a young lady going out in the world, was the delight of her mother's life. Eleanor, a wild young girl, called by her brothers by many *aliases*, was studying French, with no great success, under the charge of Madame Dumont, and setting all rules of English grammar and orthography at defiance.

It could not be expected that Sir Gilbert's letters to a son under the age of twenty would contain any confidential communications on political matters. Nor do they. But there are indications in the general correspondence of his political influence having suffered some diminution about this time, or rather before it.

Horace Walpole, in his last Journals, under the date of February 1773, mentions Sir Gilbert Elliot as the man "whom the King most trusted, next to Lord Bute, but who nevertheless had been acting discontent for the last two years." He also frequently alludes to misunderstandings between Sir Gilbert and Lord North, and on one occasion describes a popular vote of Sir Gilbert's, on which he divided the House against Ministers, as a revenge for Lord Barrington's refusal to give a commission in the army to one of his sons.

This theory is not, however, consistent with two others equally put forward by Walpole. *First*, That Sir Gilbert, in opposing Lord North,

was acting secretly by the King's instigation. *Second*, That military patronage was entirely at the disposal of the King. For it is obvious, that had Sir Gilbert's influence with the King at this time been so great as Walpole supposed it, he would not have met with the treatment from Lord Barrington, by which he thought himself so much aggrieved.

Certain allusions in the letters rather lead me to suppose that the King himself may have been somewhat cool in the matter of Hugh's commission, and that when the latter left England, his father's position at Court was not what it had been. At all events, there can be no doubt that Sir Gilbert saw in the refusal of Lord Barrington to nominate his son to a captaincy in the Guards, a studied insult to himself, and a triumph to his enemies. It was "a party move," as indeed every question affecting a "Scot" was sure to be considered in those days. Lady Elliot not only shared in her husband's feelings, but was still more sensitive to the hardship of parting with her promising and brilliant son, at a moment when she had believed him to be about to enter on an honourable career in the service of his country; this distress bore all the harder upon her because she was at the time suffering from ill health, and smarting under the disappointment of a hope she had conceived of seeing her eldest daughter suitably married. Many a long letter did she write to her absent son on the subject of her grievances.

"These things give me a disgust to the world that I can hardly overcome, but yet am chained to

Lady Elliot
to Hugh,
1772.

the oar, and called upon to drag still into public a dispirited tormented mind. I can seldom go anywhere without meeting persons and objects mortifying to me. Lord Barrington—faugh! my soul rises at him!—is very studious to make up to me when we meet, which politeness I return with equal politeness, although I see an evident sneer on the face of a false heart. What a farce is this world!"

Again she writes, "One sees one's-self, from faction and narrow jealousy, an object of universal ill-will, and no support from any quarter except the talents of a person however in some degree upon the decline." Lady Elliot's style like her feelings was vehement, and that her family did not share in the latter to their fullest extent, is evident from another passage in the same letter, in which she says, "You know the characters of your father and brother's philosophic minds so well, as to know that they cannot enter into nor understand what agitates me; their affections are equal to mine, but their imaginations are not so sensible, and they often do not perceive, or do not care for, what agitates me."

Gilbert to
Hugh.

This assertion is partly justified by the very concise manner in which Gilbert informs his brother of the event that had so wrung his mother's spirit, namely the marriage of Isabella's faithless adorer to another lady. "Mr. Rumbold's marriage gives us all great satisfaction. My sister is glad he is out of her way," and in the autumn of the same year, he rejoices that an alarm of opposition to Sir Gilbert in the

county was to carry them all to Minto, and would give Lady Elliot an occupation she was better fitted for than that of match-making. A few months more sufficed to give her some of her children's philosophy, and alluding to her once desired son-in-law, she barely admits "that he *might* have made a good husband, though corpulent and a money worm."

The summer of 1772 was a melancholy one in 1772. England and Scotland, owing to the numerous failures of banks; among which, that of Fordyce was the most felt. Dismal are the scenes described. "Not a workman to be seen in the Adelphi, the Adams having stopped payment. For some days everybody alarmed and suspicious, and the run on the banks so great that it was a wonder any of them stood it." In the midst of these dreary descriptions it is refreshing to find Isabella writing cheerily of her London amusements. The Opera was still good, "though the departure of Madame Heinel had half broke the maccaronis' hearts;" but "the pleasantest thing we have done was a water-party to Richmond in papa's barge. We dined there, and walked and drank tea. We had Banks and Solander, and their music, that, if they had gone round the world, would have gone with them. At Richmond we met another party, with your friend Colonel Harcourt and his music, and we joined parties and went together to Vauxhall. We stopped at Kew, and serenaded the Prince of Wales. Solander is very happy that he is not sure of going his voyage, though he does not dare

Isabella to
Hugh,
June 23.

say so. They have quarrelled with Captain Cook, who goes in the 'Resolution.'"

The autumn found the family at Minto, where they were joined by Gilbert in time for the Kelso races; he making his journey from Scarborough in a collier, which was unable to make the Tyne at Newcastle, and landed him and a friend on the Durham coast.

While in the North, Lady Elliot and some of the family went to Edinburgh to see the Dowager Lady Elliot, who died in the following year; and from thence Lady Elliot writes thus characteristically of the society to her son Hugh:—

Minto, 1772. "The misses are, I am afraid, the most rotten part of the society. Envy and jealousy of their rivals have, I fear, a possession in their minds, especially the old part of the young ladies, who grow perfect beldames in that small society; but upon the whole there are many worthy, agreeable, well-principled people, if you get over the language, manner, and address, which are at first striking."

London,
1773.

Early in 1773, we find Lady Elliot writing again from London. As I have already said, Sir Gilbert was taking an active part in Parliament, and one not always friendly to Lord North; but the kind letters of Lord Stormont respecting Hugh, and the active friendship of Lord Suffolk, were producing kindly civilities on the part of the King; and before the summer Sir Gilbert wrote to his son that it was intended to send him Plenipotentiary to Munich. The letters from Sir R. Gunning and Mr. Wroughton, which were ad-

Minto, 1773.

dressed to the Foreign Office in London, and made such gratifying mention of Hugh's military exploits, were read by the family at Minto, and with equal pride and rejoicing; and before the winter arrived they had had the happiness of welcoming him to England, and of embracing him again in his London home.

At that time Hugh was clearly his mother's favourite son; "the joy of my life, the friend of my heart," as she frequently calls him; "planted firmly in the hearts of all;" and all the dearer to her, perhaps, because not all her pride in the parts and character of her eldest son could ever make her overlook his habits of silence and reserve, which were probably increased in her presence by her utter absence of self-control. In the course of 1773, he was entered at Lincoln's Inn, and, his mother tells us, was highly popular there, "where prepossession in a man's favour is nine points of the game." No doubt that during the following winter both the brothers entered fully into the amusements and follies of the town, for their subsequent correspondence has many a reference to those "merry days," with no less frequent reflections on the drain they had inflicted on "*the Rhino*."

From the correspondence which recommenced on Hugh's departure for Munich early in 1774, we gather that the well-known figure of the young maccaroni riding a long-tailed pony in the park had been sketched by Lord Townshend for the benefit of his pretty new wife, and that she carried it about in her work-bag, though not deeming it

"prudent" to let her young adorer have a copy of her own portrait. Miss Waterton, the great "fortune," afterwards Lady Grimston, was much touched by the sight of Hugh's dejection on bidding her good-bye, though "she was not so romantic as I should have been," said Lady Elliot, "and preferred a rich peer to a young envoy;" but "Miss" somebody else "would really have done for you, and made you a rich good wife, if you had not been determined to say she was crooked and squinted, before you looked at her." His old flames, the Duchesses of Northumberland and of Queensberry, "the latter beautiful and coquettish as ever," are mentioned as frequently inquiring for him, and so too did the King and Queen. "No one ever left so many friends," said his mother. "We are certainly the happiest family in the world in ourselves," wrote his sister, "but I think, of all I love you and my mother best;" and Gilbert in the same strain says,—"I lose in your absence, my dear Hugh, more than anything you have left behind can make up, a true friend and almost the only companion I perfectly love. We have all lost a great deal of cheerfulness, and all know it will not return till it brings you with it."

Yet, in spite of all this love and praise, Lady Elliot's first letter after her son's departure for Munich shews that she was not blind to the defects which threatened to obscure his many remarkable qualities. Love—true love—is never blind; quick to see the first germ of good, it is no less quick to discern the quarter whence danger may come to

the thing beloved. It is the triumph of love *not* to love blindly, but, knowing all, seeing all, to love on, through all, and in spite of all.

After which digression on the nature of love, I resume the thread of my great-grandmother's reflections. Writing to Hugh from Minto, July Minto, 1774 28, 1774, his mother tells him she had begun to write letters to him which, on reflection, she had destroyed, but that she was now determined, once for all, to enter fully to him into her ideas of his character, and of the dangers his peculiar temperament would expose him to, sparing neither praise nor blame, "for I have never known an ingenuous mind the worse for praise, nor a candid one for blame;" and she then proceeds to draw and to contrast two ideal portraits of a young man, who, possessed of certain good qualities and defects, rose in the one case, by overcoming his faults, to the height of fortune, and, in the other, by want of the same powers of self-control, disappointed all the expectations which had been formed of him.

The letter is too long to transcribe, and has all the peculiar faults of Lady Elliot's style—exaggeration in expression, and a redundancy of words—but it is the production of a clever woman, and of a tender mother. The picture she gives of Hugh is distinct. Slight and slim in figure, with handsome features and a spirited countenance, his appearance pleased, even before his lively wit and soft and gentle manners confirmed the first impression. Cultivated in mind, and possessing all manly accomplishments, he had made himself "a name in courts and camps before attaining his

fifth lustrum," and yet remained "the best of sons and brothers, and the most romantic of lovers."

But now comes *le revers de médaille*, and we are told of the possibility that this uncommon character might "be rendered useless by a want of economy which ruined his affairs; by giving himself up to the indulgence of ridiculing characters that he despised; by neglecting the common forms of civility and attentions, as visits, letters, etc., and yielding to an hereditary sauntering, *alias* indolence, which prevented him from cultivating his talents—led him to lie in bed in the morning—to lounge undressed till near dinner-time (as is practised at Horseman's coffee-house, Oxford)—to dress in a hurry, and be too late for dinner—to neglect his accounts and bills, by which his family and affairs went into confusion, his despatches were neglected, and his friends at home disgusted. Having formed his taste for characters that are rarely to be met with, the same want of self-restraint led him to be openly impatient of others of a different cast, and to shew them a repulsive coldness; thus he contracted an *ennui* that blasted all the promises of fortune."

It is remarkable that this letter, which was written in July 1774, a month after Hugh's arrival at Munich, anticipates every charge which was afterwards brought against him during his residence there, by relatives at home or friends on the spot.*

Other passages in the same letter shew that

* See the letters of Sir Gilbert, of Mr. Liston, Mr. Pitt, Madame de Thun, 1775-76.

an idle winter in London had not been unattended with ill effects, and that his mother rejoiced over his removal from "that noxious nest," where frivolity and extravagance were the order of the day, and his brother maccaronis—"the absurd puppies of the age"—were given over to gaming and vice.

While Lady Elliot was taking advantage of the retirement of Minto to give good counsel to her son, Isabella was deploring that he was not with them "to partake of our dancing to a bagpipe, and the charming sweet sounds of backgammon and billiards, and the magic-lantern, which are our devices this summer for passing the evening when we have company, which after a good ride in the morning, and a good dinner, prepares for a comfortable sleep at night." Kelso races were particularly brilliant that year. In those days the dwellers on the southern border seem to have frequented them as regularly as the inhabitants of the four counties (Roxburghshire, the Merse, the Forest, and Tweeddale), the Northumberland and Delavals being as constant attendants as the Buccleuchs, Douglasses, Kerrs, and Elliots.

Bob was the poet of these festive meetings, and it may be believed that some of his effusions in the style of the New Bath Guide were not much inferior to the celebrated song of the Melrose Ball. But poor Bob was given to quaff more noxious draughts than the poet's nectar, and the allusions to him in the letters can rarely be read with satisfaction.

October
1774.

Parliament was dissolved in October (1774), and, before the new one had assembled, the family left Minto, most of them for the last time, except Gilbert, whose home it was to be, and Isabella, who returned there once only, and for a very short period, on a visit to her brother; none of those who were now leaving it ever came back; nor did Hugh or Alick see it again from the time when they left it as boys. It does not appear that any of them, except, perhaps, Sir Gilbert himself, entertained any affection for the place, and the ladies certainly considered that going down there "was a great breach in society." The love of Minto, which we now guard like some hereditary spell, came in with a stranger, for Gilbert's wife was the first who is said to have "loved Minto passionately."

But the Minto of those days was not the Minto of these. The sheet of water which now reflects laburnums and rhododendrons in sight of the windows, was then a narrow burn running under banks shaggy with thorns; where the flower-garden is now, stood a dismal little church in a corner dark with yews, and dreary with unkept graves; the manse, surrounded with a few untidy cottages, stood in the policy beyond the little glen, near enough for the minister to see the family as they sat at dinner in the round room on the ground floor, known as the "big room" by uncles and aunts, and as the "*schol-room*"* by the children of to-day. The rocks

* This is vehemently denied by our four boys, who keep to the old name.

may have been finer then, when no woods hung like drapery on their sides, but, from the old castle, one must have looked down on muirs and heaths where now lie the woods of the Lamblairs, or the green slopes and corn-fields which smile in pleasant Teviotdale.

The green hills are possibly the only feature in the place which remain unchanged, though the village which clusters at their feet is new.

In those days, roads were few, and drains were not, and the dwellers in a land where high farming triumphs, will sometimes lament the days when fences were odious and turnips undiscovered. Yet, on the whole, though sunny days may then have shown bright stretches of whin or of heather which have disappeared now, we must admit that we live on a drier soil, and in a more "innerlie" country, and have a greater variety of cheerful pleasures than fell to the lot of our forefathers; so peace be to their ashes! even though they did not care for Minto.

The meeting of Parliament in October 1774, October
1774. had, as I have said, assembled the family in town.

Gilbert, who had taken his first fee at Durham in the preceding summer, was now steadily applying to law, and Isabella is the chief chronicler of the amusements and *ou dit* of the town during the ensuing season. "There are forty young Etonians in the new Parliament, and about 170 new faces. Bob, the waiter at White's, is chosen for the same place with Mr. Wedderburn, upon which Lord Suffolk said, he made no doubt they would make a very distinguished figure, being both *bred to the Bar*."

Isabella to
Hugh.

Isabella to
Hugh.

The Opera occupies a larger space than Parliament in the letters of the sisters. "There is a new opera of Rauzzini's composing, which is the prettiest music I ever heard, upon the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, which is very much admired. He sings and acts admirably, and all the ladies who have any feeling cry at it. I should also have been much affected if I had not unluckily sat behind Beckie Scott,* who *sospirid and pian-gered* so much, and wet her handkerchief so plentifully, that I was like to die with laughing at the time Rauzzini was in the agonies of death. And you must not be angry, but I assure you Lord Stormont turned quite pale, which also diverted my obdurate heart. Fop's Alley was also much moved, so you may with truth assure his friends at Munich, he, like Orpheus, can move oaks and stones with the divine powers of harmony."

Lord Stormont's unreturned passion for Lady Henrietta Stanhope,† is alluded to in all the preserved memoirs of the time, and very frequently in this correspondence, but if she was, as Lady Elliot describes her, "a sailing peacock, and an insufferable rigid coquette," he had no great loss.

Then, as now, all London talked for weeks of *fêtes*, which, when they came to pass, were voted "the stupidest thing imaginable." Nightly at Ranelagh, 4000 people met; 5000 tickets were issued for one night's admission to the Pantheon, to hear a woman sing, whose voice had a greater

* She afterwards ran away with her music-master. See Walpole's last Journals, vol. i.

† Daughter of Lord Harrington, married to Mr. Foley.

range than the harpsichord. Masquerades, private balls, and regattas, for the amusement of the two Royal Dukes, occupied the world of fashion, and "we had some very good parties ourselves," at one of which, "a little private party," Franky North personated the young Lady Sutherland, just arrived from the north, and "so well, that your friend Cadogan was quite taken in, and made up to the fortune, till all of a sudden Franky gave a great Westminster halloo, to poor Cadogan's extreme confusion."

Eleanor to
Hugh.

Prince Orloff, covered with diamonds, was one of the lions of the day, but so many of the great people had only just come to town, and had unpacked nothing finer than "Queen's ware,"* that few entertainments were given him. He was however happy to stare at the beautiful Lady Mary Somerset,† who was just "come out," and at the equally beautiful Duchess of Devonshire, just presented.

While the sisters, and chiefly Isabella, were writing to their brother on such topics as these, his parents found painful matter of correspondence in the condition of Hugh's affairs, which, as I have shewn in my first chapter, became known to them at this time. Anxiety for his health also disturbed his mother's mind, and when to these causes of disturbance were added the flight of Hubback, a clerk, from Sir Gilbert's office, with a sum of £10,000, for which he became liable, and the grave and threatening aspect of political affairs, which in Sir Gilbert's opinion made the

* The New Wedgwood pottery. † Afterwards Duchess of Rutland.

existence of the Ministry very doubtful, it is not to be wondered at, that the letters of the parents in no wise partook of the cheerful tone of their children.

On the 20th February 1775, we find in Walpole's Journal* that Lord North astounded the House by a proposal of conceding to the Americans the right of taxing themselves, such taxes to be revised by the Legislature at home; this last clause, however, to be merely formal. Walpole describes the debate very graphically, and his account is confirmed in most particulars by the letters. Lady Elliot says, "Sir Gilbert's part was much applauded. . . . I fancy the measure will be abused in the long-run, according to the present spirit of the nation; and for my own part, I am persuaded, though every means should be taken to prevent the English and Americans from destroying each other, that this is much too crude and hasty a concession not to have the appearance, on the other side of the world, of fear, and therefore will make them ten times more refractory than ever."

February
1775.

"The King does not like this new *piano* opera. He, like you, has more taste for the bravura songs: but I hate them, and am glad to hear *cantabile*, for I hate hissing and cat-calls. Lord Suffolk sings loud in the chorus of the *piano* piece; his first secretary, the handsome one (Eden), has been much about Lord North of late."†

The successful appearance of Gilbert at the bar of the House of Lords, on an appeal case, and

* Vol. i. p. 463.

† This letter is partly in cypher.

also before the Commons Committee of Elections,* was the brightest spot on which the parents' minds could dwell at this time. Lady Elliot's account of it I have already extracted. Sir Gilbert's is not less full; and Isabella writes that her father's anxiety was greater than her brother's.

The summer of 1775 found the ladies of the family at Tunbridge Wells. From thence they wrote long and characteristic letters to their brother.

"I live at home at my ease," says Lady Elliot, "with good sensible old women with which Tunbridge Wells, August 1775. this place abounds. Among them is Mrs. Carter, the translator of Epictetus, a being full of piety and virtue; and before I finish the subject of the society here, I must tell you that there is an old friend of yours who resides about a mile from the Wells with his mother, who makes the soul of all assemblies or companies he is with,—I mean poor Tom Erskine, the father of three children, and a fourth about to come into the world, with the glorious funds of a lieutenant's pay to support his family! Ah! let us compare and reflect on the contrasts in human life. Your fate appears to him full of felicity; yet he has that candour of mind to rejoice in what he thinks your good fortune, and to wish only he had been as fortunate. I wish you would write him a few lines to assure

* "Mr. Fox considered the speech of Wedderburn on the Douglas cause as the best legal argument he had heard, or at least second to none but that delivered by Sir Gilbert Elliot on the Poole Election, of which Mr. Fox always spoke with unbounded admiration."—*Lord Holland's Memoirs of the Whig Party*, vol. ii. p. 9.

him of your friendship and remembrance; but they must be on the same companionable footing you were originally together, for his situation renders him proud and touchy, the natural consequence of a depressed high spirit. He has indeed a vivacity, talents, accomplishments, and knowledge, that I think will at last prevail and raise him from his obscurity and poverty. Every one who knows him becomes interested for him with a zeal that will certainly some time or other make his fortune, in spite of the cruel embarrassments he has brought himself into by his mad marriage to a frightful, long-nosed, awkward woman, who has, nevertheless, *douceur*, virtue, and amiableness to recommend her, and a love of him as strong as it is romantic. His mother has, I believe, about £400 a year, on which she maintains him and his family, besides an unmarried daughter, . . . and what shews the power of religion, they are cheerful and content, only he is forming schemes of advancement as full of humour as of impracticability."

A great portion of this letter relates to Isabella's lovers. "It has been the decree of Heaven that several have felt her power on their hearts—have writhed under it, struggled, and, by the intervention of some mysterious power, got free," a termination which did not prevent Lady Elliot from describing most amusingly the intricacies of each particular case. Eleanor, too, makes her first appearance in public life at this time, and a little romance of hers, which ended very tragically by the death of the hero, "young Delaval, the only

son of the Delavals," caused some diversion to her mother's agitations respecting Isabella; but Eleanor was very young, very gay, pretty, and admired, and "a few jaunts" about the country sufficed to restore her spirits. Her own letters on the subject are very pleasing and natural.

From Tunbridge the elder members of the family went on a tour of visits, and, among other places, to Luton, Lord Bute's, and to the Norths.

"Luton is the finest and most expensive palace I ever saw," writes Isabella; "pictures and every other refinement of taste that can be collected; but it shews plainly that these things are no way conducive to cheerfulness or happiness, as it is a kind of melancholy grandeur that is inexpressible. He himself struck me very much; he is now the gayest of the family, and amuses himself with his library and *vertù*, and seems to have in a degree forgot past times, but has a sort of horror for all the world, and we are the only visitors, except his own family, that have seen this magnificent fabric. His manners are vastly amiable—a little romantic, which, you know, is to my taste; but a disgust, which the ingratitude of the world has given him, makes him too *sauvage* to mix with it, and his family, when with him in the country, take the colour of their minds from his. I cannot but wonder at the difference, coming from the one to the other of this family, contrasted with the simplicity, jollity, good-humour, and easiness of Lord North's life and conversation; but I should think something between both would be the more happy medium,

Isabella
Elliot,
Nov. 4,
1775.

though never were there better people than the latter." She had written in May of the same year, when the bad news arrived from America, that they had been staying with the Norths. When the Minister received it, "he seemed very easy, to our great surprise; but he is the most likeable creature I ever saw, and one must love him and all the family for their good-humour and kindness."

October brought the world to town. Parliament re-assembled, and the Queen's first drawing-room was unusually full. The news from America grew blacker by every mail; but Eleanor probably spoke the truth, when she wrote in fun, "the trial of the Duchess of Kingston fills the mind of all the inhabitants of this great metropolis; people seem much more sincerely interested in this cause than in the American War."

The Norths seem at this time to have been the most intimate friends of the younger branches of the Elliot family. "Miss North is still the same charming amiable creature as ever," writes Eleanor. "I was at Bushy for a fortnight, where I saw Mr. Eden several times. He and Lord North took it into their heads to tell me your illness was cured by a large hump growing upon your back, higher than your head; and they talked so much about it that they frightened me out of my senses. They had a good laugh at me, because I said I would rather have it myself, or that any of my other brothers should have it, for they were not so handsome; besides that Gilbert, besides being an elder son, might put his

Eleanor to
Hugh,
November
1775.

councillor's wig upon it, Alick might cover it with Indian gold, Bob's gown would hide it, but Hugh and a hump would never do."

No such deformity as that imagined by Lord North could have been more unnatural or grotesque than the edifice which London ladies were then erecting on their heads. "The heads in France are now higher than ever, and England follows apace. Two or three ladies have sported such a quantity of feathers, blonde, flowers, artificial cherries, plums, strawberries, grass, radishes (which is called *coiffures à la légume*), cauliflower, etc. etc., all at once upon the same head, that it has frightened and surprised the less adventurous part of the sex."

Eleanor,
1775.

The year 1776 was prolific of letters, and accordingly it has a whole volume of the correspondence to itself.

The opening letters from Sir Gilbert and Lady Elliot relate to Hugh's desire to abandon the diplomatic profession in order to join the army in America as a volunteer. Both write to him in very different styles, but with equal good sense, on the subject. When, however, he had been persuaded to abandon the project, it was admitted that the chivalry of the idea, though of the De la Mancha school, had not been unappreciated by those to whom it was known. The King had been struck with it, and from this time seems to have been especially gracious in his inquiries for the young minister.

A letter of Lady Elliot's, of the date of February 1776, gives some curious particulars

February
1776.

concerning the Ministry of the day :—" The King, always good and well-intentioned, must be much harassed by the embarrassed state of the public and his own servants. As far as I know, he is firm to his servants without favouritism. The Premier is a man of the best nature and humour I ever knew, and with superior talents as a speaker ; I believe he is a well-intentioned, honest man, but he has no enlarged views either in men or things. He has been the dupe of little tricking jobbing knaves, the foremost of which is the new baronet, Sir Grey Cooper, . . . who has been playing to disunite Lord North and Lord Suffolk ; but thanks to the good sense, fairness, and abilities of Mr. Eden, they are, in spite of all schemes to defeat it, thoroughly united at present. That Lord Sandwich is omnipotent at the Admiralty, and Lord Barrington in the Army, is most true ; it is no less true that few ministers except Lord North would submit to this ; but, however, I fancy, he either must, or quit the helm, as at least the Army department seems to be one a higher power will never relinquish. This, however, creates great embarrassment and confusion in business. . . . From the nature of the man who governs the fleet, and the sub-governor of the army, all [business*] is carried on in the most irregular, slovenly, if not mercenary manner, and their creatures employed,—witness Gage and Greaves. Things are, however, becoming too serious for trifling, and they are now obliged to look for men of real abilities."

* Word illegible.

In the same letter she deprecates Hugh's impatience of the society in which he lived abroad, and points out how little he had to regret in his removal from the temptations of an idle life in London.

"I will say, that if fortune had placed you in Feb. 5, 1776. a situation to exist among these beings of dissipation and extravagance, you would soon have lost the richer gifts with which she has endowed you. . . . It is true there is now and then a genius and character amongst them that rises in spite of defects and all disadvantages of habit and education, such is Charles Fox, such is Lord Lyttleton; but what would they have been if they had applied their whole force to embellishing their great talents, and to fulfilling the noble duties of their birth! What are they now? ruined profligate gamesters, and obliged to devote themselves to party for subsistence, disregarded and distrusted."

Most of these letters, at the length of which "your father grumbles," contain passages of religious advice and reflections, and among them is a paper drawn up by Lady Elliot for the use of her youngest daughter when preparing for confirmation, which shews a cultivated and liberal mind, as well as deep religious sentiment.

When Lady Elliot was writing to her son, as she constantly did at this time, of the insufficiency of earthly pleasures, and of the transitory and fleeting nature of all earthly things, she little knew that events in her own family were about forcibly to illustrate the truths she inculcated.

In the spring of the year 1776, Alick had returned, somewhat unexpectedly, from India, with the reputation of being the "first young man there for character and abilities." At that time, or soon after, it became known to Sir Gilbert that Lord Suffolk proposed to recall Hugh from Munich in Autumn, in order that he might be sent to the far more important post of Berlin. Circumstances of various kinds prevented the family from making their annual visit to Minto at the close of the session, and summer found Lady Elliot preparing to take possession of a house at Twickenham, with the joyful hope in her heart of shortly seeing all her children re-assembled about her again in the scenes familiar to their childhood. They had parted years ago, in their promising youth; they were about to be reunited, still young with the promise fulfilled; each of the three elder sons had established for himself a reputation which betokened a distinguished career. Gilbert had just been returned from Morpeth, and entered Parliament with every prospect of attaining a position there. Hugh and Alick were both, in spite of their youth, high in the confidence of the Governments they served. Eleanor's approaching marriage with Mr. Eden, "whose abilities," Sir Gilbert said, "will carry him high," was a joyful event already looming at a very near distance.* Isabella, the one whose future was perhaps the least assured, was idolized at home and admired abroad, and entered into the successes of the others with the most cordial and unselfish affection; and,

* She was married in September 1776.

strange to say, for that one summer Bob himself, the *né'er-do-well* of the family, shewed steadiness and an inclination to work. To complete the family picture we must not omit the parents, both of whom were scarcely past the prime of life; Lady Elliot, being not much above forty, looked, as we are told by her daughter, "ten years younger, and very handsome;" and both she and Sir Gilbert might with reason anticipate a long possession in the future of their prosperous lot, influential in politics, popular in society, and happy at home. At this moment of their lives, at all events, they seem to have been conscious that "the lines were cast to them in pleasant places."

The family correspondence proves this. "What joy," writes Lady Elliot, "to have your father and *all the six* with me again! . . . We shall re-visit the old places; your old school-room still exists."

Lady Elliot
to Hugh,
1776.

Alick writes :—"I have visited the mill and the rivulet and the Thames, the spots where we first learned to love each other, and now only you are wanting to make us perfectly happy." And Hugh, writing of the anticipated meeting at Twickenham, says :—"What family can be happier than ours is now, all meeting again happy and prosperous, and loving each other as well as of old?"

Alexander to
Hugh.

The meeting took place in the month of September, and was followed by a few brief days of happiness, but even during these a speck was in the sky. Sir Gilbert had returned from his son's election, and from a hasty visit to Minto, with a neglected cold and cough; hectic symptoms rapidly appeared. Soon after the meeting of Parliament,

he found himself unable to attend the House of Commons. A change of climate was ordered by the physicians, and early in November he was on his way to Nice, with Lady Elliot and Isabella, and under the especial charge of Hugh.

A letter from Gilbert, dated Lincoln's Inn, 19th November 1776, well describes the sympathy which Sir Gilbert's illness had excited among his friends.

Nov. 19,
1776.

"The warmth, and I really believe the sincerity with which almost everybody I meet receives the account of your journey and its success, is affecting, particularly in the House of Commons, where he is truly missed by every man who has the least soul, and who knew the part he used to fill there.

"Perhaps his absence, by withdrawing him from all those little competitions which warp vulgar, and, I am afraid, even superior minds, may have made the universal concern for his situation more sincere than was expected in that callous scene. But, whatever the reason is, it is certainly so, and to me is a subject of the most sensible and touching pleasure I now experience, and yet it makes me melancholy. To find nothing but an affectionate remembrance of one who used to be so principal when present, *there* is a change that makes one feel, and makes one think a little of what all this is that we are busy about."

Hugh accompanied his family as far as Avignon; there he was relieved in his melancholy duties by his brother Alick, and, apparently on account of matters connected with his recent

appointment to Berlin, he returned to England, after a parting so sad and painful, that Sir Gilbert is described as frequently recurring to it, saying with a sigh, "Poor, poor Hugh! how unhappy he was to leave us."

And far bitterer still that parting would have been, could a glance into the future have revealed to him, that not only of his father, but of mother and brother* he was taking a last farewell; and that when he should see his favourite sister again, his chosen and cheerful companion, there would be "upon her face the tint of grief, the settled shadow of an inward strife," and even he, her best and dearest, would have no power to bring relief to "that which preyed upon her mind, a spectre of the past."

* Alick did not return to England till after his brother's departure for Berlin, and he shortly after returned to India, where he died.



CHAPTER THE THIRD.

1777 ~~1778~~

BERLIN.

THE month of January 1777 was marked by two such events as make epochs in the history of every family, the death of the head of the family, and the marriage of him destined to fill the vacant place ; by the one event two generations change places, by the other the foundation of a new family is laid, which may or may not link the past to future hopes.

uary 11.

uary 3.

The nature of the change which had taken place is significantly marked in this correspondence ; hitherto the brothers had written to each other on personal topics chiefly ; from the parents came more general information, and sometimes counsel, remonstrance, and reproof ; henceforth Lady Elliot's letters will be but few, and those few will relate to matters of a purely domestic character, to her health, her sorrows, and her altered circumstances ; while the letters of her eldest son become, and continue, the most valuable portion of the correspondence.

The new Sir Gilbert was well fitted to take the chief place in the family.

Less ambitious and less laborious than his father, less brilliant and enthusiastic than his mother, without his brother's handsome person and lively manners, his were the gifts which need only to be known to gain for their possessor love and honour, and "troops of friends." From his earliest years he seems to have inspired his family with the most entire reliance on his character and conduct, and also on his tenderness and indulgence to those less free than himself from reproach.

When young he accused himself of indolence, and in after years his wife took up the tale ; but whatever more he might have done, he did live to fill high situations with honour, and to be distinguished among the band of eminent men who during many years opposed at once the encroachments of the Crown at home, and the influx of Jacobinical principles from abroad.

From his wife there are but few letters among my grandfather's correspondence, which, however are easily and pleasantly written ; and we know that she was a woman of strong character and of warm heart, with looks and manners which betrayed her southern origin, an ancestor of her father, Sir George Amyand, having been a Huguenot refugee.*

Anne Maria
Amyand,
eldest
daughter of
Sir G. Amy-
and.

From various remarks in Lady Elliot's letters

* The family of Amyand came originally from the south of France. Lady Elliot's eldest brother changed his name to that of Cornwall on his marriage with an heiress, Miss Velters Cornwall. He was the father of Lady Hereford, and of Lady Duff Gordon, and of Mrs. Frankland Lewis, and of other children.

Maria and
Harriet
Amyand had
been
brought up
by Lady
Northamp-
ton, wife of
their uncle
Mr. Amy-
and.

while the wooing was in progress, it appears that the marriage was not desired by her, and possibly the young lady's want of personal beauty was no slight demerit in the eyes of one who had a large share of the good gift herself; in her earliest allusions to her son's attachment she talks of it as an "unnatural passion for an ugly woman;" but mobility of expression may do more to make a face attractive than regular beauty of features, when these "have been created without the preamble of 'Let there be light.'" At all events Sir Gilbert never grew tired of admiring his wife's dark eyes and lively looks.

Lady Elliot
to Gilbert

The marriage, which took place in London on the 3d January 1777, appears not to have been known at Marseilles before Sir Gilbert's death on the 11th. That he had given a cordial assent is clear from some expressions of his quoted by Lady Elliot in her account of his last hours—"He said," she writes, "about five days before the last one, 'By Miss Amyand's letters she is a sensible good woman, and I believe will be a good wife and comfortable relation;' and then he added with great energy—'What a wise man Gilbert has been to leave the skirts of the fine people and associate with men of sense and character who have led him into a conduct of virtue and wisdom which I hope he is now established in following.' I told him that you suffered cruelly that your affairs had not admitted of your attending him on this journey—he said, 'I know Gilbert feels much that his nature will not permit him to shew.'" Of all his children Sir Gilbert seems to have spoken

tenderly and frequently, while still cheered by the hope of again being restored to them and to health; but the sufferings caused by paroxysms of coughing which followed on any agitation, led him gradually to avoid all affecting and exciting topics;—"If," writes Lady Elliot, "I ever gave him any strong expressions of affection he said, 'don't—don't—the least thing would'—and then he stopped, fixing his eyes with pity and tenderness on me and on his daughter. As he lived so he died, a pattern of meekness, patience, and fortitude."

Lady Elliot,
Marseilles,
January
1777.

The return of Lady Elliot to England did not follow immediately on her husband's death; with a natural reluctance to leave the scenes where she had last beheld him, she lingered on in the South of France till the month of March; arrangements were, however, immediately carried out for the interment of the body at Minto, where, nevertheless, it did not arrive till the following August.

In a letter written at this period to Hugh, his mother quotes some lines composed by her husband on his father's death, which, she says, are applicable to many of the circumstances which accompanied his own—

"O sacred flame,

Devotion pure, whose energy divine
Exalts with humble hope the lowly mind,
And trust and fortitude bestowest, thou *fill'st*
His pious breast, and resignation taught
That first great lesson—best preparative
For life and death—he learnt it and obey'd.
His mind refin'd and strong, no sense impair'd,
Nor feeling of humanity, nor taste
Of social life, and e'en his latest hour

In sweet domestic cheerfulness was past.
 Sublimely calm his ripen'd spirit fled,
 His family surrounding, and his friends,
 A wife and daughter clos'd his eyes, on them
 Was turned his latest gaze, and o'er his grave—
 Their father's grave—his sons the green turf spread.
 Such be my fate, indulgent Providence,
 When from the tumult of a noisier scene,
 The same still grave shall near a father's side
 Receive the ashes of a son he lov'd."

"All is accomplished," wrote Lady Elliot in continuation, "but the last part, and I hope that is not far distant. I have also a strong cordial in his having signified to me that my presence with him was his comfort. I have a cordial, indeed, in my dear children's duty and affection, which nothing can surpass, and in their virtues and qualities; I balance all these things, and I acknowledge the providence of God, yet nature will weep for what is past, and tremble for what may come."

On the arrival of the sad news in England, steps were immediately taken to ensure the succession of Gilbert Elliot to the representation in Parliament of the county of Roxburgh, vacated by his father's death. The first letter, addressed by Gilbert to his brother Hugh in the spring of 1777, is written from Minto to Hugh in London, and is occupied with the details of his canvass in the county. After describing his prospects of support—the friendship of the Duke of Buccleuch; the almost paternal kindness of Hugh Scott of Harden; the strong disposition of the county gentlemen in general in his favour, Sir Gilbert winds up thus—"I cannot shut my letter without giving you all the comfort our misfortunes leave

us, and that which I have found a very real and affecting one to myself; I mean the adoration with which my father is, by almost all ranks of men, here remembered."

It appears from the letters relating to county politics at this time, that a political alliance was in process of formation between the Dukes of Buccleuch and Roxburgh, which, unless opposed with infinite spirit and union by the other gentlemen of the county, would, it was feared, place the representation of Roxburghshire entirely at the disposal of the two Dukes. On this occasion the Duke of Roxburgh, at the instance of the Duke of Buccleuch, withdrew his brother, Lord R. Kerr, in favour of Sir Gilbert Elliot, though Lord Robert's canvass had actually commenced.

So great a sacrifice made by the Duke of Roxburgh as an act of friendship for the Duke of Buccleuch, who, besides being kindly disposed to Sir Gilbert himself, was unwilling to thwart the wishes of the county gentlemen, declared pretty unanimously in his favour, sufficiently attested the intimate nature of the connection between the two great peers; and it was generally believed that a private understanding subsisted between them to the effect that the withdrawal of Lord Robert on the present occasion would ensure for him the Buccleuch interest at another election. Jealousy of this alliance between the two Dukes laid the foundations of a new party in the county, which, under the name of the independent interest, frequently and successfully contested in after years the representation of Roxburghshire with the

nominees of the Duke of Buccleuch. On this occasion Sir Gilbert was returned without a contest; and having previously resigned his seat for Morpeth, he returned to town at the end of February as M.P. for Roxburghshire.

About the same time Hugh departed for his new post at Berlin, which he reached on the 1st of April.

Berlin.

Wraxall's
Memoirs,
vol. i.

The Court to which my grandfather was now accredited was as unlike as possible that which he had just left. In place of the gay and dissipated Munich, he found a capital of regular and handsome architecture indeed, but in "the streets of which reigned an air of dejection at noon-day, scarcely any passengers being seen except soldiers." The only court held there was that of the Queen, the neglected wife of Frederick the Great; to her all presentations were made, and her receptions, at rare and stated intervals, were the only royal entertainments at which Berliners were called upon to assist; but so parsimonious were the habits of the Court, that the occasional glimmer of an old lamp in the staircase of the palace, was sufficient to make a passer-by exclaim—"Her Majesty doubtless holds high festival to-day!" and so scanty were the provisions at the royal table, that those who had the honour of partaking of them, previously fortified themselves with a repast at home. Thiébauld tells us, that on one occasion a great lady especially recommended by Her Majesty to the care of the assistants, received for her entire portion one preserved cherry!

The fête day of the Queen was the grand gala of the year, for then Frederick honoured her with his presence, and taking off his military boots for that day only, appeared for the space of half an hour in silk stockings, which, ungartered and ill fitting, fell in folds around his legs.

No less unlike to the splendours of Nymphenburg was the residence of the Prussian King at Potsdam, "rather a military station than a city. ^{Wraxall.} Guards and hussars constituted half its inhabitants," while the little palace of Sans Souci, a quarter of a mile off, consisted only of one range of apartments on the ground floor.* "A sandy barren soil and groves of gloomy fir gave an air of melancholy to the surrounding scenery," says an English traveller whose words I have before quoted, and after expatiating on the evidence of military despotism apparent throughout the land, he adds: "the Prussian monarchy reminds me of ^{Wraxall.} a vast prison, in the centre of which appears the ^{1777.} great keeper occupied in the care of his captives."

As a parallel to the Englishman's opinion, we may place that of the Marquis Louis d'Yve, a friend of my grandfather's in Ratisbon days, who on hearing of his appointment to Berlin, wrote to him thus: "Je crois que le séjour de Berlin vous conviendra à de certains égards—on y traite ^{Ratisbone, 27 juil/76.} les ministres à la Vénitienne; la cour et la ville ont peu de communication avec eux, les personnes auxquelles ils se lient, et les maisons qu'ils fréquentent deviennent mêmes suspectes; ils vivent beaucoup entre eux, ou seuls, selon leur

* The new palace of Sans Souci was then in process of building.

Clubs. génie; leurs sociétés sont des espèces de *Klops* anglais, ils n'ont pas besoin de briller par les équipages, et le seul train nécessaire est d'être en état de bien donner à diner à leurs amis—voilà bien des titres pour Berlin vis-à-vis de vous! D'un autre côté, il y a beaucoup de princes qui ont chacun une manière de petite cour, il faut les voir et ceci est une gêne un peu multipliée." The princes alluded to by the marquis Louis d'Yve, were, besides the king and queen, the prince* and princess† of Prussia—both of whom became subsequently friends and correspondents of my grandfather—Prince Henry, the king's brother, who lived chiefly at the castle of Rheinsberg, at about twelve miles from Berlin, and the princes of Brunswick, nephews of the queen,—other princes and princesses there were who came and went, and some who lived constantly at Berlin, but in a degree of retirement which prevented them from being known to the foreigners who at this date visited Berlin.

My grandfather appears to have formed his earliest social relations in the country among the members of Prince Henry's court at Rheinsberg, among these were his aides-de-camp the two Counts Wrech, designated as le gros et le petit; "le brillant Kaphengst," of whose "hot youth" Thiébault tells wild stories; "le beau Kniphausen, beau comme l'Apollon de Belvédère," and afterwards too well known in my grandfather's story; among the

* Afterwards King Frederick William, nephew of Frederick the Great.

† A princess of Hesse Darmstadt.

ladies the most prominent were the Countess de Verelst, widow of a late Dutch minister at Berlin, and her "fairest daughter"—"sans contredit la plus belle personne de ce pays." Mr. Harris. Madame de Verelst, Thiebault. "née Sophia von Platen" (Thiebault tells us she was a demoiselle de Bredow),* had been one of the band of high-born and beautiful dames de cour of the Queen Sophia Dorothea—mother of Frederick the Great. From those days she had kept up relations of amity and confidence with various members of the royal family, especially with Prince Henry, at whose castle of Rheinsberg she spent every summer. She had been married en premières noces to M. Von Krauth, a Prussian officer, by whom she had one daughter, a beauty and a reputed heiress, whose charms, though she was barely sixteen, had endangered the peace of the last English envoy, and were destined to have a more powerful influence over his successor.

The general society of Berlin was composed of the native aristocracy, which, from want of means, contributed little to its brilliancy, of foreign diplomatists, of strangers, and of men of letters—these last were chiefly Frenchmen who had been induced by Frederick to form an academy at Berlin.

Mr. Harris had described them to his successor as "little above our village schoolmasters;" but my grandfather,† who had both literary and

* By Berlin etiquette all *dames de cour* were unmarried.

† During his idlest days at Munich he had corresponded with Mesmer on the subject of animal magnetism, and with Mr. Brydone on electricity and kindred topics.

scientific tastes, seems to have frequented their society and to have liked it. There are many letters from various academicians in this correspondence, but the men are best known from the amusing memoirs of Thiébault, one of their number.

To Mr. Harris my grandfather was indebted for a pithy description of the members of the diplomatic body, among whom he was now to take his place.

I insert it here—it will be seen that the names are in the second column, the qualities of the proprietors in the first.

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| FRENCH MINISTER.— Optimus. | Pons, Marquis de. |
| PALATINE MINISTER.— Good; to be consulted about visits. | Schlipp. |
| SARDINIAN.— Ingenious; odd; suits me; good for an Italian. | Rosignan. |
| AUSTRIAN.— Clever; honest; morgue. | Swieten.* |
| SWEDEN.— Enfant avec de la barbe. | |
| DUTCH MINISTER.— Friend of Harris; faults, but good. | Heyden. |
| Nihil. | Pr. Doulgorouky. Sweterheim. |
| Odd; avoid familiarity. | Michel. |
| Avoid generally toutes les femmes. | |

* He was soon removed and succeeded by Count Cobentzel.

In addition to this sketch of diplomatic personages, there is a similar table describing the chief persons in society, but as it can no longer contain any interest, I shall only transcribe one entry.

| | |
|--|---|
| PRINCE HENRY'S COURT.— Tracassiers, faux, impertinents. | Barons Kniphausen, Kaphengst, Denon, Marechale. Avoid all of the name of Wrech. |
|--|---|

Madame Verelst.—Good ; mention Harris's respect and esteem as often as possible.

Such was the general aspect of the court and of the society to which my grandfather was introduced in the spring of 1777.

I find no letters from him describing his first impressions of either, but in the letters addressed to him there are passages which throw some light both on the reception he met with and on his own views of the place and people.

Thus Mr. Brydone, writing on the 2d May 1777, says—"It gave me great pleasure to know you have met with so agreeable and so gracious a reception ; I was sure, indeed, this would be the case, as you are exactly the character the king likes." And Madame de Thun writes,—*"J'ai été bien agréablement surprise de voir par votre lettre que mes alarmes sur les désagrémens que je croyais que vous trouveriez dans la société de Berlin sont inutiles, et que vous êtes si content de votre séjour ; l'éloge que vous en faites, quelque pompeux qu'il soit, ne me tente cependant pas, et je vous avoue que je ne me fais pas l'idée d'une société sur laquelle la subordination s'étend, ni des agrémens d'une ville qui doit son existence au fer*

8th July,
Vienna.

et au feu, encore moins d'une capitale qui est un camp ; où on ne peut faire campagne gaiement.

Wm. Harvey,
Esq.,

"Vraiment si je ne savais pas combien on est charmé de passer son temps avec vous, je croirais qu'il doit y avoir à Berlin d'autres agrémens, moins hérissés de baïonnettes, de tambours, et de manœuvres, puisque Harvey, que je ne crois pas militaire aussi passionné que vous, y reste si longtemps."

My grandfather's military tastes had led him to form an enthusiastic admiration for the great soldier of his age, and no doubt the military manœuvres which formed the staple amusement of Berliners were peculiarly interesting to him, but as Madame de Thun shrewdly surmised,—Berlin had other attractions too.

Of these, however, he did not think it necessary to write home, and they find no place in a gay letter to his sister Eleanor, written in the summer of 1777, in which he describes his life at Berlin :—

Stanhope.
Bertie.

"I very often place myself at your looking-glass window at Greenwich, and hear you call me mad with the greatest pleasure, while Eden's never-resting fingers write notes and politics with that wonderful punctuality which none of your indolent brothers ever could attain. I suppose myself, then, asking for a sandwich, devouring Ticonderago, and Philadelphia, while you are making conquests for Lady Anna Maria, and Lady Priscilla, passing in review the good kind of men, and good kind of estates, upon whom your friends might rationally bestow their senti-

ments and persons in exchange for dirty acres and irresistible gold. You are in your scarlet riding-dress just dismounted from *Poet*, and I am hagged with sitting up last night and winning twelve hundred from as needy a younger brother as myself!

"What shall we talk about?

"*Madam* begins. Well, Hugh, how do you like Berlin?

"*Hugh*. Monstrously; the tallest grenadiers you ever saw, the most melodious drums, the sweetest trumpets, the most delicious artillery, and the loveliest hussars.

"*Madam*. Are your women handsome?

"*Hugh*. Prodigious! Six feet high, six feet round, as brawny as your chairmen; then they eat, and, bless the pretty creatures, they drink a little too, a set of jolly dogs I assure you.

"*Madam*. How do you pass your time?

"*Hugh*. Harvey and I seldom meet till twelve, when we go to a lecture on Natural Philosophy; at one we mount; Brilliant, and the brown horse, gallop as hard as they can lay legs to ground till two, in a beautiful park; at two, dine, drink one bottle Burgundy, success to old England, play at cribbage till four; at four go to a lecture on Chemistry; at five, mount the nags again, or, if there should be a violent supper in town, dress, arrive there at seven; from seven to nine play at shilling whist; at nine sit down to supper with forty people, faire l'agréable with amiable neighbour; to bed at one, and rise next morning with a comfortable headache, and melancholy reflections upon high

living and poverty," but of Madame Verelst's "fairest daughter," not one word!!

And now, what was thought of Hugh at Berlin?

Thiébault tells us that at this time arrived "M. Elliot, homme d'esprit et délié; de plus, assez bel homme, très-vif, et très-aimable, original sans doute; on n'est point anglais sans cela;" and then to prove the originality of my grandfather's opinions, he goes on to tell us, that one day giving a dinner to some academicians, "il nous soutint" that Shakspeare was sublime, and much more so than Corneille, while Racine was never sublime at all. To these assertions such a flood of eloquence was replied, that the host appears to have closed the discussion by the assurance that he had much admiration for Racine, who was one of his favourite authors.

On another occasion, says the same writer, he undertook to prove to us that the French language, which he spoke perfectly, was, when compared with any other modern language, and more especially the English language, an essentially poor one.

There was certainly some originality in propounding these views to a dinner party composed of French academicians!

June? 1777.

The first occasion on which my grandfather came very prominently before the notice of the Berlin public was one not calculated to improve his position there. I allude to the seizure of the papers of two American agents who had lately arrived in Berlin, with the purpose, as it was supposed, of carrying on secret negotiations with the

court promising future commercial advantages in return for present assistance of officers and money.

The very first official despatch addressed by Lord Suffolk to Mr. Elliot at Berlin desires him to watch the conduct of these "rebel agents," Messrs. Lee and Sayre; and the second despatch describes Mr. Sayre as a man of desperate fortune. Mr. Lee was said to possess higher abilities, and to be most in the confidence of Messrs. Silas Deane and Franklin.

The presence of these persons at Berlin was announced by the Prussian minister to the English representative, he being at the same time informed that the King of Prussia had too high a sense of the regal dignity to give his sanction to the rebellious colonies by receiving their emissaries, who were therefore obliged to maintain a strict incognito.

Mr. Elliot, however, saw some reason to doubt the friendly assurances of the Prussian ministers; and the rest of the story, written at length by himself to the Prince of Prussia and to his own government, may be shortly told as follows:—Certain persons were desired by Mr. Elliot to watch the proceedings of two soi-disant Americans lately arrived at Berlin, known to be agents of the rebel Congress. Offers were made to Mr. Elliot to procure him secretly the papers of the strangers, and to replace them without risk of discovery, which offers were accepted by Mr. Elliot, and promises of reward were given to those who made them. Nevertheless, nothing came of

St. James',
9th May
1777.
Cypher.

these proposals, the risk attending on their execution being found too great. A German servant, however, in Mr. Elliot's establishment, being made aware of his master's anxiety to procure evidence of the secret objects which the Americans had in view at Berlin, by overhearing him say at his dinner table that he would gladly give a sum of money to any one who should bring him their papers, did of his own accord, and in the most imprudent and reckless manner, break into the apartments occupied by the Americans in the hotel of a certain Corsica, entering the room by the window, opening their bureau, and carrying off the papers contained in it, and making his exit by the same way.

The master of the house instantly accused Mr. Elliot's servant of the theft, stating that he had been offered a thousand pounds only a few days before to become an accomplice to it; several persons belonging to the hotel were arrested; and the police were pursuing active enquiries into the circumstances of the affair, when Mr. Elliot came forward and declared that he considered himself to be solely responsible for what had occurred. One of his servants, he said, was undoubtedly the culprit, and had been led to commit the act by Mr. Elliot's own imprudence, he having in the servant's presence expressed himself in the indiscreet manner before mentioned. No time had been lost in restoring the papers to their rightful owners, and Mr. Elliot submitted himself entirely to the judgment of the king of Prussia, acquitting his court of any share in so unjustifiable a transaction.

The king gave to this candid avowal a gracious answer, to the effect that he should wish the subject dropped, but Mr. Elliot thought it his duty to advise his own government to recall him from a post where the credit of his court might possibly be impaired by the conduct of its representative on this occasion.

Mr. Liston was sent home at once with letters explanatory of the circumstances, and on the 1st of August Lord Suffolk wrote to Mr. Elliot as follows—"It gives me real concern when I find it my duty to convey any intimation of His Majesty's dissatisfaction with the conduct of a minister whose zeal in the public service is as little doubted as his ability; and who, by an excess of the former quality, has been induced to swerve from that discreet regard to his own situation and the dignified principles of his court, which ought on every moment and on every occasion to regulate both his actions and his language."

Lord Suffolk goes on to comment on the expressions which, by Mr. Elliot's confession, he had hazarded at his table—"expressions which, however they might arise in the warmth of conversation without any serious meaning being intended, were highly improper to be used by the representative of a court which disdained, and will ever disdain, to trust the crooked paths of duplicity and treachery."

After stating that the generous behaviour of the King of Prussia on this occasion to Mr. Elliot prevented the necessity of adopting Mr. Elliot's suggestion that he should be recalled, the despatch ends by recommending him for the future to "ab-

stain from vivacities of language, and to control and discourage so criminal an activity on the part of his dependants." A little later another despatch informs Mr. Elliot that the king had entirely overlooked the exceptionable circumstances in the business, in consideration of the loyal zeal which occasioned them; and the despatch closes by the announcement that the expenses incurred by Mr. Elliot would be indemnified by the crown.

Mr. Eden, writing confidentially to his brother-in-law—October 1777—tells him that the King of Prussia's feelings on the subject were not quite such as he had been led to imagine:—

"We had the best reason to know that they were by no means quieted to the degree you supposed; when you were told that the outrage was forgiven, we had absolute proof that you were only told so, and that it was likely to be seriously resented. . . . The information itself we had already obtained through another channel. . . . You have now only to appear, and to be very discreet in your attention, and in all other respects to pursue the engaging conduct that your own nature would dictate."

This letter, most affectionate and friendly throughout, dwells much on the almost parental feeling of Lord Suffolk for Hugh Elliot, on the kindly disposition of the "closet" towards the young minister, and ends thus: "Let me, however, give you one official caution—recollect always that your letters are for the Royal eye, which is so constructed as to be shock'd at any coarse expression. You lately said 'that a certain

prince would do anything to *get a shilling.*' I altered the three last words to "gain an advantage for his people."

It has been necessary to tell this story at some length, because the subsequent relations of Mr. Elliot with the court of Berlin were affected by it in no slight degree.

From that period he never recovered the ground which he seems originally to have occupied in the king's good graces, nor does he appear to have adopted Mr. Eden's conciliatory advice, nor to have sought to regain the Royal favour by attentions and deference.

The king condescended to "*bouder*" the young envoy—the latter affected to disregard the king—the king growing gradually more and more hostile to England, amused himself by twitting her representative with the failures of her policy, and the unsuccessfulness of her arms; and the minister retaliated by replies, of which the sarcasm was equally delicate and sharp.



CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

1777 to 1778.

THE FAMILY.

WHILE Mr. Elliot had been employed, as we have seen, at Berlin, his family had not neglected to keep him informed of what was passing in London. Early in March the Dowager Lady Elliot and Isabella had returned to England, Sir Gilbert and his wife having gone to Paris to meet them.

A curious succession of accidents caused the various members of the family to miss each other, though actually crossing the channel or approaching its shores on the same day; thus, Hugh had sailed from Gravesend (for Cuxhaven) a few hours before Sir Gilbert and Lady Elliot arrived there, and they, during a passage of four hours to Calais, crossed Alick on his way to England, while the Dowager Lady Elliot and Isabella, who were travelling leisurely from Paris, were passed on the road by Sir Gilbert and his wife hurrying to join them in the French capital!

The delay of a day in Paris gave the Elliots an opportunity of seeing something of the town—

of dining with Lord Stormont and his young wife, and with her sister, the 'charming Mrs. Graham,'* and also of renewing acquaintance with Madame Du Deffand. "I saw her and was charmed and warmed towards her by the sincerity of her concern in me and mine, and all of us."

Sir Gilbert
to Hugh
Elliot.

Hurrying away from Paris, they retraced their steps again to Calais, and there rejoined their mother and sister. "What that meeting was, you may imagine!" writes one of the party.

Returning to England together, they were met at Canterbury by Mr. Eden and Eleanor, and all proceeded to London, dreading, as others have dreaded, the first sight of familiar objects associated with bygone days. In deference to the feeling which made Lady Elliot shrink from returning to the "dark house," the "long unlovely street," the

"Doors, where *her* heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,
A hand that can be clasp'd no more,"

her children had arranged that she should not revisit her old home, but should be conducted at once to a small cheerful house in Clarges Street, which they had taken pains to prepare for her arrival. There accordingly she was soon installed, with some of her children about her, and pictures of the absent ones hanging on the walls; and there she and Isabella remained till summer sent them to look for "charming air, and gardens and green fields—in *Knightsbridge*."

* Wife of the future Lord Lynedoch,—a portrait of her by Gainsborough was one of the gems of the Manchester Exhibition.

But before that time arrived, their spirits were further tried by another painful parting. Alick's leave having terminated, he returned early in May to India, and his departure produced a sad letter from his mother to Hugh. "That your fate and Alick's," she wrote, "notwithstanding all your advantages, require perpetual absence, is a heavy sorrow. May I not say with the Duchess of York in Richard—

"'But death has snatch'd my husband from my arms,
And pluckt two crutches from my feeble hands,
Clarence and Edward. O what cause have I,' etc. etc."

You both live, thanks to heaven! but you are both lost to me; you, perhaps, I may still embrace, though perhaps not, but Alick, I daresay, I have parted with for ever, his picture is now before me in my snuff-box, and that is all I have of him who lightened my burdens with unwearied duty. May heaven bless and preserve him, but he is gone to a climate which will, I am sure, destroy him."

Alick himself returned to his distant post full of energy and spirit, and with what appeared to be a well-grounded hope that he might live to achieve a brilliant and useful career; but the event proved ere long that his mother's forebodings were more truthful than his own anticipations. He went to India by the overland route, and from Constantinople he wrote to Hugh that the various wonderful exploits performed by the latter during the war on the Danube, were still the theme of conversation in the society there.

During the spring, Isabella and Eleanor both

wrote frequently to Hugh, and in their letters we get glimpses of many old friends, besides more distinct views of the members of the family group.

Both the sisters agree that Maria is most "loveable and charming, with every good and agreeable quality," worthy even of "my brother." "They are indeed a very pleasant couple," writes the mother.

The letters of the Edens are sunshine itself. "The world still wags on as it did when you was with us," writes Eleanor; "some are happy, some are unhappy, but of the former none are a quarter so happy as *votre petite sœur*." And her husband tells her brother that "Eleanor is the delightfulest creature in the world—defies and despises politics—and makes preparations of pap!" And then, with the *couleur de rose* of home reflected on the Foreign Office, he declares "the political horizon of Europe" to be "clearing up, the American broil waxing fainter, and at all events England more resolute and more cheerful than ever."

"Bob," we hear, "cuts his hair à l'abbé, which is the first step in the church," and Isabella gradually returns into a little quiet society, is touched by the kindness of her reception on her first appearance at court, and meets here and there with old "flames" and friends of Hugh's, of whom she makes mention to him—"Mr. Pitt was very agreeable at the opera last night. Miss North, merry as ever, bids me tell you she is very much in love with one person, and going to marry

Isabella
Elliot,
London,
1777.

another; and her brother is at Oxford ready to hang himself because Miss Egerton has refused him"—"which I believe he is very glad of," adds Isabella. "Lord Lindsay, outrageous as ever, was so smitten with the sight of Lady Barrymore, just returned from Paris, that he wanted to carry her home instead of the chairman from his mother's party; but Mr. Fawkener, who was to have been his partner, being afraid of the fatigue, he had to give it up; he goes to America, and the poor duchess cries night and day about it."

Mrs. Eden
to Hugh.

Lord Suffolk, Hugh's kind and constant friend, married Lady Charlotte Finch in the course of the summer, and this event gives rise to many remarks from both sisters on the charms and merits of the bride—"She is really a very good kind of girl," writes Mrs. Eden, "but no doubt you will infer that she is not handsome, as that would have come first, and I will not attempt to describe her, as all the answer I should receive from you in return would be, all the better for her soul—which is all I ever get from you or Mr. Eden if I do not begin by saying, 'She is very pretty, or rather handsome,' when you will listen to other qualifications with tolerable patience."

"However, though I cannot say this of Lady Suffolk, she has qualities which will make his life happy and comfortable, so much so that most of his friends have thought his marriage a subject on which he might with great propriety be congratulated! Upon my word, Hugh, you are the greatest gig in the world. I daresay you will say that we all know no one can rejoice in his happiness more

sincerely than you do, but if you will not even be at the trouble of writing him a letter to tell him so, you must own he is not obliged to find it out."

A description of Mr. Harris making an imposing figure at Ranelagh—"Making love in a box, and eating bread and butter in the regular way," prepares us for another marriage; and before the summer was over the "dangling diplomate" had become one of the family by marrying Harriet Amyand, youngest sister of Lady Elliot. The wedding is so graphically described by Mr. Liston, who assisted at it during his visit to London on business connected with the affairs of the rebel agents, that I cannot do better than to insert it here.

"Yesterday," he writes, "was a very busy day with your friends here,—a marriage and a christening within a few hours of each other; your niece was baptised by the name of Eleanor Agnes, your mother and sister standing godmothers;* and after dinner, during which many jokes were cut at Harris, the company adjourned to Lincoln's Inn Fields, where they found the bride, her two brothers, Lady Cornewall, your brother Bob, Miss Harris, and Lord Northington. Here a most trying scene ensued. Six o'clock was the hour named for the ceremony. The priest was ready in his pontificals. The young lady sitting anxious, arrayed in virgin white. The bridegroom standing upon the tiptoe of expectation, a frock ex-

Mr. Liston,
29th July.

* Eleanor Agnes, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Eden, married in 1799 the Earl of Buckinghamshire. She was my godmother, and one of my earliest and best-loved friends.

tremely *galant*, colour of *soupirs étouffés*,* lining and waistcoat *bleu de ciel*, a very handsome embroidery, beautiful *brandebourgs*. These were looked at and admired by everybody. Why don't we proceed? said some one. The license is not come. Good God! what shall we do? When it came to be inquired into, it was found that they had not had an adequate idea of the possible delays of the law, and had not applied time enough to give allowance for accidents. But the proctor, who ought to have understood that matter, had faithfully promised to be there at six o'clock. After waiting an hour in a very awkward situation, Sir Gilbert went to the proctor's house to inquire for him. He had set out in the morning to wait on the Archbishop, whose intervention was necessary in the case, and who happened to be fourteen miles out of town. He was not returned. When this answer was brought, a dozen of suppositions were formed, one more comfortless than the other. The man was robbed. He was killed by a fall from his horse. He had not found the Archbishop at home. As they had not employed the Archbishop's own proctor, it was to be feared *he* had found means to raise some difficul-

* *Soupir étouffé*—a pale lilac—was the fashionable colour of 1778.

In Madame D'Arblay's Diary, vol. i., p. 87, it is thus mentioned, "we had been talking of colours, and of the fantastic names given to them, and why the palest lilac should be called a *soupir étouffé*, and when Dr. Johnson came in, she (Mrs. Thrale) applied to him.

"'Why, Madam,' said he with wonderful readiness, 'it is called a stifled sigh, because it is checked in its progress and only half a colour.'"

ties that might have induced the Archbishop to refuse giving his consent. This uncertainty, than which it is not easy to conceive anything more completely disagreeable, lasted till near ten o'clock at night, when the license arrived, and they were at last married. I must do Mr. Harris and his young wife the justice to say, they bore it in a way that did them great honour. They both have a degree of patience, or a command of face, much beyond what I can boast of."

Mrs. Harris, who was only sixteen, writing herself to Hugh, says, "never was so merry a wedding as mine! We waited four hours for the license! your humble servant behaving like an angel, or rather like patience on a monument smiling at the 'Bear teas'd by Bees' on the chimney-piece, the only tolerable sign of grief in the party."

To this letter Mr. Harris appended some lover-like remarks on the lady's beauty, as she appeared on that eventful day, which, however, are not corroborated by other correspondents of my grandfather, who, whenever they allude to her looks, invariably confine their approbation to her "very fine hair." Her letters are extremely lively, and in allusion to the vicinity of the rooms which she and Hugh Elliot had at one time occupied under Sir Gilbert's roof, she usually addresses him as "Pyramus," signing herself "Thisbe." On their way to St. Petersburg, the Harrises spent a couple of days at Berlin, which they seem to have found very pleasant ones, and soon after their arrival at their post, Mrs. Harris

reports to Hugh the number of inquiries she receives concerning him from his old military friends, Marshal Romanzow among them. "He presented me to his mother, a fine old lady of past eighty, who has seen Louis XIV., Queen Anne, the Electress Sophia, Peter the Great, and the present King of Prussia's grandfather, and talks of them all as we should of King George and Queen Charlotte. She was in Berlin just after the battle of Pultawa,—she is Dame du Portrait to the Empress, and sits up every morning till two or three o'clock."

Mr. Harris was supposed not to dislike display, and one of my grandfather's correspondents writes at this time:—"He is likely to figure still more magnificently at Petersburg than he did at Berlin; the lady's taste for éclât being at least equal to his. He has bespoke a sumptuous service of silver plate. He proposed to omit the covers to the dishes, as being not absolutely necessary, and as making the difference of £1000. "Pshaw!" said la petite ambassadrice, "what signifies a thousand pounds! have the covers:" the covers were accordingly ordered.

Shortly after the marriage, the Dowager Lady Elliot went to a house in Knightsbridge, "quiet as Teviotside;" and Sir Gilbert and Lady Elliot proceeded to Scotland, whence all accounts agree in describing her unbounded popularity, and her thorough enjoyment of Minto. From Mr. Liston we hear of her gaily dancing with the colliers at Lochgelly; her impressions of Roxburghshire let her tell for herself:—

Minto, Sept. 13.—After a few remarks on her sister's late marriage she goes on:—"I don't, however, believe she is half as much delighted with papas and mammas, and uncles and aunts, as I am with the burns, the glens, the rocks, and the Nutbank. I am even partial to Ruberslaw and the Dunion, charmed with Mount Teviot and the *Yielding* (Eildon) Hills, overcome with the beauties of the smooth, green Minto Hill, and in ecstasies with Denholm Dene. But all these delights have been interrupted by Kelso races, which kept us all last week from home. The meeting was called thin; excellent sport, and good balls, where I flatter myself with having made new conquests in an uncommon way, some by talking, some by laughing, some by dancing, and some by strong beer; how shocked will you be at this last, it is not at all sublime or delicate, but purely rustic and natural. I had the pleasure of knowing the whole time that I was the object of staring and observation, and the dread of a drunken husband every evening; somehow or other, however, he escaped all inconvenient jollity, though many of the *geniuses* sat up all the three nights, dancing on tables and climbing up the walls. I can't say how glad I was when it was all over. We spent a day with Lady Diana Scott; their place is quite delightful, the prettiest I have seen except our own, but I like my own the best.

"We have a ball at Jedburgh in view, so no prospect of tranquillity as yet. * * I declare, when I look back to the last twelve months, it is so full of circumstances, and those the most ma-

terial ones in our lives, that it is quite a dream—that is, like one; God forbid it should be really so, that would be a bad joke. You will have the Harrises soon at Berlin, I must in that respect envy you and them." A few allusions to Bob wearying over his studies, and to Alick broiling under a tropical sun; to Eleanor's anxieties about her baby, and to Lady Elliot's melancholy state of feeling, occupy the remainder of the letter, which terminates thus,—“and when I look round I find no one without distresses but myself.” Had they been written at the time, she might have quoted the words of Longfellow—

“And only the sorrow of others
Throws its shadow over me.”

1777.

Nov. 28.

The chief event of the autumn, in the estimation of the family, was the first public appearance of Sir Gilbert Elliot in the House of Commons, of which Isabella thus writes,—“You will, I am sure, rejoice to hear that my brother has made his first appearance in the House of Commons with very great approbation. He seconded the address, and though he was vastly terrified when he went down to the House—poor soul, he was as cold as ice—notwithstanding so great a disadvantage everybody joined in giving him the highest degree of praise, and there was the greatest disposition possible in the House in his favour.”

Sir Gilbert,
Dec. 16.

On the 16th of December Sir Gilbert wrote to his brother a description of the scene which ensued in the House on the receipt of the disastrous intelligence of General Burgoyne's surrender. “The

House of Commons sat the very day on which the news from Canada was received. It was a singular moment. Lord George Germaine very shortly, but in a manly way enough, told the story to the House; opposition began, by the most extravagant expressions of deep sorrow, from which there was a pretty sudden transition to violent rage, mixed here and there with a spice of triumph; and the patriotic grief which opened the debate had soon degenerated, as all other feelings and topics generally do in the House, into invectives against ministers, threatenings of impeachments, and motions for immediate inquiries into their conduct. The House, although deeply affected by the loss of our army, and by the share of dishonour which must for a time fall on our arms, were perfectly steady, and betrayed no marks of weakness. They refrained from coming to any resolution whatever that day, both for want of evidence, and because we were not quite cool enough for deliberation. In general, however, although all acknowledged the event as a heavy calamity, yet the idea of considering the fate of the nation as depending on it, or that Great Britain should stand or fall by the success or failure of a single expedition was rejected with proper spirit. Preparations are carrying on with more vigour than before. Both fleet and army are to be augmented, and, I believe, the plan of the war changed. It is said the commanders too. The country has not altered its tone. Manchester, immediately on the receipt of the bad news, offered to government to raise and equip a thousand men. I believe some declaration will,

at the same time, be made of our claims on America, that the ultimate question we are fighting for may be somewhat more definite, and the Americans may not have their uncertainty on this head to plead in aid of their cause. For my own *private* part, I could have wished that this declaration, if it is to be made, had come at any other time. Lord North has, however, pretty much committed himself on this point in the House." Mr. Eden, writing from Downing Street on the the same day, by the same mail, says, "The story" (of Burgoyne's disaster) "is mortifying and embarrassing enough—but the nation is steady, the parliament temperate, the administration firm. We have full conviction, indeed, that the Americans are no cowards, but that is no reason with us against fighting them, and all the world, if necessary, in a just and honourable cause."

Such were the views of politicians. Mrs. Eden probably described, with tolerable accuracy, the general impression produced on the more frivolous part of London society by the evil tidings from the colonies, "News is arrived from America," she wrote, "which Government people say is nothing, and the Opposition say is very bad."

Such differences of opinion have been seen in our time between *ins and outs*, and go far to justify sensible women in "defying and despising politics"—betaking themselves to preparations of pap!

The letters which were written to Hugh by his family during the winter of 1777 and 1778, confess a melancholy fact, which might have been

surmised from the rarity of his mother's letters among his correspondence of the preceding summer—namely, the existence of a partial estrangement between herself and her favourite son. Misunderstandings appear to have existed on both sides, and to have dated from the time of Hugh's last return to his father's roof, that time of re-union so joyfully anticipated, so sad in the reality, so painful in the retrospection.

If the renewal of personal intercourse had not tended to strengthen the sympathies of mother and son, subsequent neglects of punctuality in correspondence, which led to suspicions of reserve and of diminished confidence, had served to increase these mutual discontents, till at last Sir Gilbert openly alluded to them, and in his usual tender manner assured his brother that on the side of the family there was no diminution of the warm affection all had ever borne to Hugh.

He writes,—“My idea is that you, in the course of last summer, conceived that your family and friends here had in some respects neglected you, and had perhaps permitted your absence to cool their affection and love for you ; and that you have farther conceived that some circumstances in your public conduct may have deprived you of a share of your favour with those in government, with whom you are more particularly connected. You see I state a subject which, between any other two men might seem a delicate one, quite plainly. The fact is, that no subject between us can be delicate, because you know my heart and its sincerity as well as I do myself, or as if it were

in your own breast. I have mentioned this apprehension of mine merely to assure you that if you have in fact, as I suppose, admitted such fears, you may and must immediately dismiss them. With respect to myself, eternal absence, and even eternal silence on both our parts, would make no difference in the truth and warmth of my love for you, nor abate any degree of my admiration and affection for a character which I know thoroughly. I can make the same assurances for every one with whom blood or friendship has connected you ; with respect to the other part of the apprehension which I have imputed to you, I have made it my business to inquire, and can assure you with truth that your conduct has given entire satisfaction, and has not only been approved but applauded. Before I quit this subject, let me ask you if there is not an awkwardness between my mother and you—you know the powers of her imagination, trifles light as air, etc.”

“Alas! how light a cause may move
Dissensions between hearts that love,
Hearts that the world in vain had tried,
And sorrow but more closely tied ;
That stood the storm when waves were rough,
Yet in a sunny hour fell off,
Like ships that have gone down at sea
When heaven was all tranquillity!
A something, light as air—a look,
A word unkind, or wrongly taken ;
Oh, love that tempests never shook,
A breath, a touch like this hath shaken.”

Sir Gilbert's appeal could not fail to meet an immediate response from so warm a heart as his brother's, and accordingly Hugh must, on receiv-

ing it, have written to his mother in a strain which produced from her the following reply:—"My dearest and well-beloved son—Your letter has touched me with the most lively emotions of joy, tenderness, and affection. These proofs of affection from a beloved child are the rewards of parents for all they have suffered on their account."

The mists which had hung between them were dispersed, and during the short remainder of her life they never formed again,—and it would have been needless to refer to what was so transient in duration, except to explain certain allusions in the correspondence.

There is something sad and striking in the change of relations which had produced this passing misunderstanding between a parent and child so full of reciprocal affection;—a few short years ago, and Hugh was to her "her dearest joy," her "best comforter," her "darling child," who took away with him the brightest light of home; the years went on, the boy became a man, "with whom," she writes, "it would be but a parent's foolish dotage to interfere, for manhood is the best judge of its own conduct and affairs, and expostulations make unpleasant society."

Absence, in giving to each independent interests and pursuits, had worked its usual effect; for as my grandfather himself wrote to one of his foreign correspondents about this time:—"Le genre humain est une si maudite race que sans l'habitude de se voir, on perd l'habitude de se chérir, et l'intimité la plus parfaite passe à la

Hugh Elliot
to Count
Montréal.

politesse, aux phrases, et aux compliments; de là il n'y a qu'un pas à l'oubli." The remark is intended only to apply to ordinary friendships—often no more than habits of personal intercourse accidentally formed, and carelessly broken—but in a modified degree it holds true in the case of even the earliest and tenderest affections, when no care is taken to counteract the baneful influence of time and separation. The adage, "let well alone," is no safe guide in matters of this nature,—let them alone, and they soon become anything but *well*. There are perhaps no more painful surprises in life than those which attend the reunion of long parted friends, whose affections have rested on what once was, but is not, and who find out too late, that to suit each other always, they should have grown with each other's growth, nor should have allowed the influences which moulded the one to leave the other unchanged.

To grapple with adverse circumstance was not one of my grandfather's characteristics; but, if his mother knew better than her son how to hold love fast, perhaps it was harder to her to let go unrepiningly the feelings she had no power to retain. The parent's destiny seemed too hard for her; not to be loved less, but to see others loved more; to resign such sympathies and confidences as belong to similar ages, and tastes, and pursuits; and to rest satisfied with the conviction, that in his sadder hours he would surely return to seek that comfort in her love which belongs to him "whom his mother comforteth."

Elliot's health, which had never been strong, shewed symptoms of rapid deterioration; perfectly conscious herself that such was the case, her letters about this time bear evidence of a disposition to put her house in order before setting forth on the journey whence there is no return. Her counsels to her son read like farewells. Her remarks on the prospects of her other children are in the tone of one whose own future is not of this world.

Writing to Hugh, in January 1778, of the actual situation, and the probable future of her children, she thus expresses herself concerning her eldest son Gilbert:—"Nothing can exceed the excellence of his heart and head; all he wants is a further stimulus to exertion. . . . His appearance in Parliament has raised him high in opinion, or rather in expectation, for it must be followed by subsequent ones, which I hope it will this session. . . . He is in a degree independent, and I am sure very much unconnected, except with the King and Lord Suffolk. At the same time I hope that politics—that waning inconstant planet—will never be his principal object, having a so much greater, and, as I think, nobler, and more independent one in the certainty of law, if once he take root in that great field. I suppose you would differ from me in this opinion, and would prefer the other line; but I speak and know from experience the difference there is to a man of spirit between what depends on his own actual strength, and on the fluctuating conditions of faction, intrigue, or favour. . . . Therefore, I most

Dowager
Lady Elliot
to Hugh.

devoutly wish the bar to be my son's ultimate object. His domestic happiness in his wife is as great as it is possible to desire ; she is indeed a charming creature, and is to me the greatest possible comfort. Her love for her husband will make her conform to every circumstance that is for his interest and honour. It is impossible for two people to suit more entirely."

7, 1778.

Isabella's situation, which at her mother's death would be one of painful loneliness, or of dependence on others, weighed heavily on her mother's mind ; and though Sir Gilbert and his wife urged her in the most tender terms to entrust them with the charge of their sister, Lady Elliot strongly felt, that "to fix the point of their living together would be unwise, in spite of the reciprocal affection subsisting between the parties ; for manners, tastes, and tempers, must all correspond to make living together agreeable ; and should it be once determined on, and then given up, a quarrel is supposed to be the cause, which is an injury to the peace of both. Therefore, I think, a certain time should be specified, and it may be prolonged at pleasure."

Lady Elliot's uneasiness on this score was subsequently removed by a kind offer, on the part of the Queen, to provide for Miss Elliot, by attaching her, when the occasion should arise, to the household one day to be formed for the Princess of Wales.

Long, however, before it became needful to take any steps for the arrangement of such a household, poor Isabella Elliot had been laid in her grave ; but the comfort which her mother found

in the belief that an independent and agreeable position was secured to her favourite child, served to remove her chief cause of distress from the last moments of her life.

Public affairs never lost their interest for Lady Elliot; though she wrote, "I can give you little Jan. 28. intelligence about them.

"A French war is much believed; I see no end of that but one, the loss of credit, and consequent confusion . . . It is curious to see a thoughtless pampered people beginning to wake from their fallacious dream of security, which they believed scarcely Heaven itself could overthrow.* The first result is the spirited raising of regiments for the service. I do not believe, if the storm comes, the Premier will face it. Lord Chatham is thought the most likely, but that can *only come from a hard necessity.*"

On the 2d February, Lady Elliot wrote again, under the impression that a union had been effected between Lord North and Lord Chatham, that the latter "had offered his services at this crisis, and had been accepted. His expression I hear to the king was, that he 'would go to the other side of the Atlantic for His Majesty's service.'† I do

* Mr. Liston had been struck the year before by "the sang froid with which people talk of entering on a war with the whole House of Bourbon."

† Compare with this speech attributed to Lord Chatham by some of Lady Elliot's courtly friends, that which Walpole, with probably just as little truth, puts into his mouth a few months later. "The king made new overtures to Lord Chatham. He said he would not meddle with the dirty people of the Court. If the king liked dirty company he might keep it."—*Walpole's last Journals*, vol. ii. p. 244.

not pretend to judge," she proceeds, "but it seems to me that Lord Chatham has made a false step in this affair, and from impatience for power and office has ruined himself with his friends by coming among his enemies, unsupported but by one man in the cabinet, and if his policy is unsuccessful *he will be the sacrifice at last.*"

Rumours of Lord Chatham's recall to office were rife through London in the first weeks of 1779; the gloomy aspect of public affairs had given rise to a general desire that he should resume the reins of power; and when it became known that an attempt at negotiation with Lord Chatham on the part of the Rockingham party had failed, owing to the antagonism of their views on American policy, which made a common action impossible, the world immediately decided that Lord Chatham was preparing to support government against those who were for giving way to the Americans.*

Gossiping stories were also afloat concerning an alliance between Lord Bute and Lord Chatham, which had no better foundation than an interchange of complimentary messages between the two veteran statesmen. To these reports Lady Elliot could hardly lend an ear, remembering "the perpetual endeavours that were exerted to preserve his union with the king in the end of last reign and the beginning of this, and the jealousy and coldness this produced from our first connections."

The policy of Lord North's ministry had been

* Vol. iv. of *Chatham Correspondence*. Letter from Lord Rockingham, *Lord Mahon's Hist. of Eng.*, vol. vi. p. 212.

so uniformly unsuccessful from the time of their advent to power, that the most sanguine of their supporters began to feel disheartened. Uncomfortable misgivings clouded the cheerful confidence of Mr. Eden :—"The short and plain truth," said he, writing from Downing Street, January 9, "is, that the poor old island is in a devilish crisis, and the embarrassments in which she is involved become every hour more numerous and more complicated ; nevertheless there is a zeal, loyalty, composure, and firmness, in the general class of the people, that exceeds anything ever known in history. Our naval force, too, is immense, and our money resources by no means deficient. We want soldiers, and what is equally material, we want generals. It has so happened, whether by necessity or misconduct I know not, that the navy has for the whole summer been sacrificed to the army, and the army has as yet done nothing towards the main business. Burgoyne's catastrophe we criticise, of course, because we are disappointed. I fear, however, there is too much cause for criticism, and it is not the least part of my censure, now the mischief is done, that he indirectly throws the blame on his orders, which orders were settled personally with him, and in part actually dictated by him ; those orders, too, at the same time that they tell him to make the junction his main object, left him a discretion according to circumstances ; and if they had not, I understand it must have been implied in every military construction of orders to be executed at that distance. Besides, he capitulated in the act

of retreating, after saying that his orders left him no power to retreat.

"Whether the expedition was ill conceived, or ill executed, or not, the event is very unfortunate to this country, and has given a considerable degree of firmness and consistency to the rebellion. We have, however, no alternative, we must go on; the rebels, in their present disposition, would not return even to a submission of the slightest kind. France and Spain pretty openly encourage them. Prussia does the same secretly. The measures which such conduct induces keep us every moment on the edge of war, but we are stout."

1778.

On the 10th February Sir Gilbert wrote—
"Of the public I have little to say; the prospect of recovering America by war is certainly at an end. The people are, I doubt, pretty unanimous; the country would defend itself almost without troops, and they have large and well-disciplined armies to oppose to ours; all that can be said in our present situation is, that if new exertions have but a chance of recovering any part of our authority in America, and of redeeming the honour of our country, it is our duty to make them."

A subsequent letter by the same writer gives a sketch of the conciliatory measures proposed by Lord North, the debates on which are fully given in *Walpole's Last Journals*; and early in March it was known that Lord Carlisle, Mr. Eden, and Mr. Jackson, were to be the commissioners appointed under one of the new acts to treat with the Americans for peace.

On the 13th of March, M. de Noailles delivered to Lord Weymouth a declaration from the king of France, acquainting his Britannic Majesty of the conclusion of a treaty of commerce and amity with the independent states of America. On the 31st, Sir Gilbert wrote—"We consider war as certain, and it is not easy to one unacquainted with the etiquette of public transactions to know why the declaration of war is delayed. France and England are making the first hostile salute, which fencers do before an assault, who present their foils, take measure, stamp with their feet and take off their hats to each other and to all the spectators. They have sent us messages, to which we have given angry answers. Both our ambassadors are at home; we have detained each other's ships and are making mutual preparations for war. The militia is called out, and there is a spirit among the gentlemen to take part in it. I rather think we wish for an invasion. The militia is only between 25,000 and 30,000 men."

Throughout the island went the call to arms. The Duke of Buccleuch offered to raise 2000 men in the south of Scotland for the defence of Scotland, "1000 were accepted, others are preparing to do the same; and the king will be able to withdraw the regular troops from the north, and we undertake to take care of ourselves. This is so much at my own door, and I so entirely love and approve the motive of the plan, which is purely public spirit, that I shall have a hard battle with myself if I resist it. As to me, the state of

Sir Gilbert.

Sir Gilbert
to Hugh
Elliot.

the question is this, it would at once knock up my law."

Isabella
Elliot, 17th
March.

"The bustle is beyond all description," wrote Isabella; "every creature from high to low is full of nothing but the war, and the thought of beating the French is very popular and pleasant to the people in general, who hate them heartily; but I cannot help feeling the horrors of bloodshed which now only an arm of the sea parts from us. The House of Commons will sit this and almost every night this week till three or four in the morning; it was reported to-day that the war would be declared at Charing Cross to-morrow, but this is certainly not so. London appears fuller than any town I ever saw, and the buzz in the streets, and the faces of the people, are beyond description. The whole world are in red coats, most of the militia look very '*bourgeois*,' but are fond of shewing themselves off in Fop's Alley."

April 20th.

A month later, Isabella described London as empty, "and many people not intending to return through summer, as the militia were to be encamped in various places. Lady Derby, Lady Cranbourne, and many other ladies, intended to follow the camp, but this the king has absolutely forbid, as it would have been such a scene of amusement; so their camp equipages, uniforms, etc., are of no use. There is no chit-chat at present; people are very sober and settled, except what is called the fine set, who are too much above humanity to interrupt their pleasures for any earthly or heavenly reason, and they make the conversation of the rest of the world, which is not

worth repeating by letter." Isabella is, as usual, the chief chronicler of the gossip of the town—Mrs. Eden, occasionally assisting with a droll account of somebody's love affairs, prosperous or otherwise, but ever persistent in her contempt for politics. "I hear," she wrote, "you are in doleful spirits about the nation—so is everybody. We shall all be ruined and undone,—but, as it cannot be helped, I shall not make myself unhappy about it—though I sincerely wish the war were over, that so many people might not be killed, and that my dear sweet husband might not have so much business, as it makes him very thin."

Mrs. Eden
to Hugh.

In Isabella's letters of last year (1777), we read that Lord Lindsay was on the point of setting out for America early in the present year, 1778. She mentions him as returned from the seat of war on leave of absence, during winter, "wild and agreeable, and handsome as ever; decidedly improved, but making the Rhino fly in a sad way." He returned to America in April, with Colonel Stewart, Lord Bute's son, married to "the fortune" Miss Bertie only a few days before his departure. Other newly married couples were under the same sad necessity of an immediate parting. The Duke of Hamilton had undertaken to raise a regiment, and was to go to America as captain in it, "which perhaps will be more to your taste than his. He is going to be married to Miss Burrell, who is a pretty little girl, very shy, and quite unknown to most of the world, as she is very young, and the fine ladies are all a little displeased; but *le coup est porté*, "he is to go six weeks after his mar-

riage"—a step which Mrs. Eden remarks on as "*most wonderful*."*

Another marriage on the tapis occupied some space in the letters of both sisters—one projected between Lord Shelburne, and Hugh's former love Miss Molesworth; "he is at least eight and forty; she not above twenty, handsome and rich." But the sequel of the story contained the remarkable feature in it, and it is thus related by Isabella—"Your divine Miss Molesworth has surprised the world by breaking off from Lord Shelburne. She dined at his house, and sat at the head of the table, and was seen to cry all dinner time. Her aunt, when she came home, asked her what was the matter. She made no answer, but ran up stairs to her own room, and sent Lady Lucan a letter to tell her she found she had an antipathy to Lord Shelburne, and begged she would break off the detested match; which was accordingly done, by shewing his Lordship the letter. He was angry, as you will believe, to lose £40,000, and so pretty a wife, but put a good face upon it, and said it was proper the ladies should settle those matters. So the coast is clear again for your Excellency."

The appointment of Mr. Eden as one of the commissioners to America, and the preparations

* Miss Burrell was a daughter of Peter Burrell, Esq., called *Lucky Burrell*. Her sister married Lord Piercy, her brother Lady Priscilla Bertie, who, at his request, changed her name from Priscilla to Elizabeth. She, at her brother's death, inherited great part of the ancestor's property, and the hereditary office of High Steward. "I wish," said Mr. Eden on that occasion, "that Lucky Burrell commanded the Channel fleet in the place of Sir C. Hardy."

for his departure, and for that of his wife, are the chief subject of the letters written in April. "Eleanor, poor soul," had been bemoaning her hard lot, "in having to sit patiently all the winter listening to the fiddles;" but the condition of her health seems never to have occurred to her as a reason for not accompanying her husband on a long sea voyage in time of war. She writes herself—"As to my staying behind him, it was an April 6. idea that could never have entered my head for a moment, and I flatter myself was never an instant in his. Had he proposed such a thing ever so gently I could never have forgiven him; and it is my pride, comfort, and boast, that he would have found it as hard a matter to leave me behind, as I should have found it an impossible one to let him go without me. As to any dangers or hardships I may meet with whilst with him, I think I shall have but little fear; few accidents can happen to one which will not be common to both; and whilst that is the case I am content. So good bye, and God bless you, dearest and most beloved Hugh."

But another parting was inevitable—that with 1778. her baby; and it was with a sharp heart-twinge that Mrs. Eden confided it to the care of her mother and sister. The Edens set out early in April.

"Eden concealed from us the day they were to go, and she did not even know it herself. She Isabella Elliot to Hugh Elliot. was playing with her little girl on Monday morning, when Mr. Eden desired her to come down to take leave of Lady Suffolk. She went out and the

chaise was waiting in Bridge Street: when she saw it she guessed how it was, and fell a-crying, but got in, and was drove off. It was a great shock, but on the whole the best way. I brought home the little girl, and she amuses my beloved mother and me with her little pretty innocent looks."

Isabella tells Hugh that it was thought very ridiculous of Mr. Storer to join the party, "merely out of affection for Lord Carlisle, and crowding the ship sadly." And before they left St. Helen's, "Storer and Eleanor had a quarrel. He has carried a pianoforte with him to charm the Americans, and found out that Eleanor's cabin would be the best place for it; but as she is not fond of music, she begged to be excused; and they were both very warm upon it, so Governor Johnston begged they would take the *piano* and leave the *forte*."*

Mr. Eden. These small difficulties at starting must soon have given way, for Mr. Eden, writing off St. Helen's, April 16, says—"The Captain (Captain Elliot, brother to the late Sir Gilbert) has exerted himself in contrivances for our comfort. Eleanor has a regular dressing-room and toilet. We have sailed ten miles in a delightful morning,

* Lord Carlisle is described by Walpole as a young man of fashion and pleasure. Mr. Storer was a rather celebrated *maccaroni*, and an agreeable man.

Governor Johnston had replaced *Jackson*, who had been originally appointed to the commission. Sir G. Elliot says of Jackson, that "his universal and detailed knowledge was never of use to him, and left his opinions as undecided and more confused than those of the most ignorant."

through a fleet consisting of 33 ships of the line, completely ready for sea, exercising guns, etc., the group much improved by frigates and Indiamen."

On the eve of his departure from England, Mr. Eden wrote to his brother-in-law Hugh a long and kind letter, from which the following passage is an extract:—"And now allow me the liberty of a sort of death-bed to give you a little advice. You have the affectionate friendship of our Principal, and the favourable opinion of his Principal; but they have each a notion that you have a predominancy of the Hotspur vivacity in your character. This would do well in many stations, but in yours it gives alarm. Be of good heart, and take heed, my dear Hugh, and you cannot fail of acting an eminent, honourable, and important part on the great stage of the world."

W. Eden,
Downing St.,
April 7.

Lord Suffolk.
The King.

The summer of 1778 found the Edens sailing on the high seas. The Dowager Lady Elliot nursing her failing health in strict retirement, cheered by the society of her children and grand-child; Sir Gilbert preparing to put aside his wig, and to stick a cockade in his hat; Isabella living "with a few friends," of whom she says—"The Duchess of Ancaster, Lady Grimston, Lady Priscilla, and Mrs. Lockhart make the chief part. Lady Priscilla sang last night like an angel; and Lady Stormont like a human being!" and the rest of the world allait toujours son train. "Lord North and Lord G. Germaine have a great deal of abuse to bear this session." "There are more bankruptcies in the fine set than ever; executions in private houses, and maccaronis flying abroad."



CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

1777 to 1778.

BERLIN.

It is probable that the sense of a change in his relations with his family was one of the causes for the deep depression which hung over my grandfather's spirit during the winter of '77 and '78; but the sole cause it was not, for money difficulties constantly harassed him, and were all the more sensibly felt, as his attachment for the fair Made-moiselle de Krauth took a deeper and more serious character. Writing to Mr. Pitt, who had lately visited Berlin on a tour to the northern Courts, he says—"I believe you doubt of the reality of my reasons of uneasiness, and attribute to nerves and temper a state of mind occasioned by anxiety and distress respecting objects over which I have no command, and that ought not to affect me more than the rest of mankind. Whatever be the cause, I know the effect, and rather than submit to it would burst this *embryo* of existence, and, in the words of the poet, spring to light, or sink to dark-

ness, as I think either better than the long tedious glimmering of the feeble lamp of life, which throws such false shades over every image within the verge of human comprehension. But I acknowledge Hamlet's dread of the dream that may follow; and although six feet underground may be an asylum for all the passions, inquietudes, misfortunes, and pain which have seized upon the surface, yet what other base, cursed fiends may await us in that fathomless abyss, to which the grave is the only entrance, who has ever emerged to tell? My coward soul recoils at the brink, nor dares to plunge. Do not think I am seriously weighing *to be or not to be*. You know a sufficient reason why I can never determine for the latter; but if that reason did not exist, I verily believe I should let go my hold, and drop without further struggle to that common centre which attracts all our species. I began this letter with an intent to make excuses for the continual gauntlet your spirits, gaiety, and gallantry run through my battalion of spleen, disappointment, and satire. I believe, however, they are too tough to have been sensible of the efforts of my feeble and dispirited garrison." Hugh Elliot
to Mr. Pitt.

Such was the mobility of my grandfather's temperament, that barely a month before he wrote this gloomy letter he had described himself to some of his correspondents as thoroughly enjoying an agreeable and brilliant position; and to Mr. Brydone, he had written that of all places he had ever seen, he liked Berlin best—"a great victorious monarch with a numerous army! I would not change for Etna with all its eruptions."

Such rapid variations of mood have been ever accepted as a lover's normal state, but they may, perhaps, be no less naturally accounted for by the disordered condition of his health, which about this period began to shew symptoms of long-standing and serious derangement.

The year 1778 was spent by my grandfather entirely at Berlin; and to judge from the letters he wrote and received, its course was one of chequered light and shade.

He continued at times to exult over the *agré-mens* of his life; at others, to lament the manifold expenses into which these led him. We find him at one moment writing admirable philosophy to his friends on the employment of time, and the adoption of the highest motives for action; and at another, laying himself open to their retorts by his own inconsistencies and waywardness. Heaven is just—it gives to some the power of reasoning, and to others that of acting conformably to reason. My grandfather, at this period of his life, shone pre-eminently in the former class.

The spring found him attending on the death-bed of his old friend, Lord Marischal, as he was commonly called. This remarkable man, who to the end of his days retained the titular dignity to which, as head of his family, he had an hereditary right, was the eldest son of Lord Keith, hereditary Earl Marischal of Scotland. Born in 1685, he lived to within seven years of a century; having in his youth served under Marlborough, he died in the reign of George the Third. A devoted adherent of the Stewarts, he left his native land on the

accession of George the First ; passed with some other Jacobite officers into the service of Spain, and only left those more genial skies to settle at Berlin, where his younger brother, Marshal Keith, entered the service of Frederick the Great. From that time he was frequently employed by the King of Prussia on missions of importance, but finally returned to spend his last years in his adopted country, where he lived and died in a cottage built for him by Frederick the Great, close to the palace of Sans Souci. Gay, courteous, and agreeable, as well as worthy of all respect for more essential gifts, Lord Marischal appears to have been generally loved and lamented. The King, with whose philosophical tastes he had much sympathy, lived with him on terms of the most familiar intimacy ; and the general estimation in which Lord Marischal was held, is thus described by my grandfather in a letter to his brother :—

“Experience gained in the school of adversity, great penetration, sound judgment, retentive memory, made him equally instructive and entertaining. He will long be cited in this country as a model of wisdom, benevolence, and virtue. I sincerely loved and honoured him. I have just learnt that an accident destroyed lately a considerable part of his correspondence, which would have thrown great light upon the principal characters of those times, when, to use his own expression, ‘we were fighting for a king and not for an empire.’”

A few days before his death, Lord Marischal summoned my grandfather to his bedside. “You may, perhaps,” he said, “have some commission to

He was
killed in
1759.

Hugh Elliot
to Sir
Gilbert.

He had died
a fortnight
before.

give me for Lord Chatham. I shall see him in a day or two!" While in attendance on his dying friend, Mr. Elliot wrote the following note, probably (for it has no address) to Mr. Hervey:—

"*Wednesday, May.*—Lord Marischal's existence is astonishing; were it not for a feverish pulse and a labouring respiration, his body would be, in all respects, a corpse. There is only enough life left in his animal frame to allow him at intervals the faculty of shewing that the mental powers have survived the corporeal. When he musters up strength to express a few words, he discovers more clearness of judgment and memory than I thought it possible nature would permit so exhausted a frame to possess. If it were worth while to form any wish concerning so indifferent a circumstance as the manner in which one would chuse to take leave of a scene that flies from us, 'Que je meurs comme ce juste,' would be mine. As you are not fond of contemplating death, I do not advise you to come here; as I, on the contrary, wish to have as much intercourse as possible with a gentleman, who will one day force himself on my acquaintance, I shall remain here to contemplate him in his most engaging form; it will make me less loth to obey his summons when called upon. Adieu. Spring has spread its fairest tint on the beauties of Potsdam; Lord Marischal alone excepted, all nature revives."

The position of England at this time was one which could not fail to give uneasiness to all lovers of their country. At open war with her colonies, on the verge of war with France, without such com-

manders for her fleet and armies as could alone make her military operations effective, and distracted in her counsels by interminable struggles for power between half-a-dozen political leaders, her history during the first twenty years of the reign of George the Third is one little calculated to thrill the reader's breast with patriotic pride.

My grandfather, young, spirited, and full of military ardour, had many a mortification to devour in silence, while acting as England's representative at a court of whose sentiments he thus writes to Lord Suffolk:—

“As to this court, it is composed of individuals thoroughly ill inclined to Great Britain; but too sensible of their own situation not to know that the day is perhaps not far distant when the existence of their power may depend upon its assistance. It is much to be regretted that there are no means of curbing the licentiousness of our public prints—I believe, I should say of our public speakers. The Duke of Richmond's speeches, translated into every foreign gazette, are fatal to negotiation. I beg your Lordship's excuse for mentioning a circumstance, which may appear trivial in England, but which is certainly of bad consequence abroad.

H. Elliot to
Lord Suffolk
5th June
1778.

To a more familiar correspondent he wrote that, “Though the wild rumours of England and its newspapers are treated at home with the contempt they deserve, abroad our politicians are too greedy not to swallow everything. I wish it were possible to publish every week an authentic negative gazette, for instance:—

"Gibraltar is *not* taken.

"The French are *not* landed on the coast of Sussex."

"Ministry have *not* resigned.

"The fleet is *not* rotten.

"The Duke of Richmond's, and Fitzpatrick's speeches are *not* gospel.

"For my own part I am silent, and keep my breath till I can join in the chorus with the British lion. One roar will drown all this impertinent clamour, and frighten Europe into its senses."

To another friend he exclaims in despair—
"For God's sake tell me what you think of Old England ; from this distance she seems old indeed, sans eyes, sans teeth, sans everything."

About this time Isabella was writing to her brother that "there was a very comical scene at the opera last night. Lord North came into the house for the first time this winter, and was very soon sent for; upon which the whole people here were led to believe that the French had landed on the Sussex coast, and that there was a rebellion there. The story gained credit, and before the end of the opera, you never saw such an excitement. However, the gentlemen in their militia uniforms seemed very brave, and ready to kill Frenchmen by dozens; and the whole foundation for the report was some smugglers that had refused to enlist in the militia."

To Mr. Eden, the news of whose nomination to be one of the commissioners to treat for peace with America had reached him some time

before, my grandfather gives his views of the probable results of the negotiation in the following words :—

“ The love of glory, that last infirmity of noble minds, must be set aside by our philosophic country till some dear, daring half-madman once more directs our thunder, or tramples on prudence, and on what people, who think themselves wise, call *reason*. This is too mad a world to act sensibly in. The same line of conduct that brings either an individual or a state into a scrape, often pushes them through it. Had we never engaged in a war with America, it might have been better for us. As it is, I fear we have stopped short at the very moment we ought to have risked everything. My conjectures are, that their terms will be haughty and overbearing. In time the natural interests of Great Britain and her colonies will trim the balance, which at present hangs so uneven. But had it been possible to have added the weight of 10,000 men to your commission, I should have had better hopes of your obtaining a peace acceptable to a nation unaccustomed to temporize, and whose spirit is more able to struggle with all the difficulties of debt and war, than to brook disgrace and dishonour.”

Hugh Elliot
to Mr. Eden.

However great may have been his secret misgivings as to the ultimate results of the war between Great Britain and her colonies, Mr. Elliot invariably maintained an appearance of the most serene composure when the subject came under discussion in the society of Berlin.

Thiébault says, “ Souvent dans la société on

Thiébault,
tom. 11, p.
309.

parlait de cette guerre à M. Elliot, et ceux qui cherchaient à lui plaire en paraissaient quelquefois éffrayés, surtout après que les Français se fussent déclarés pour les Américains. Jamais il ne répondait qu'en montrant une parfaite sécurité.

“ ‘ Tout ce qui peut nous arriver de pire,’ disait-il à la fin, ‘ c’est qu’au lieu d’être le premier peuple du monde, nous serons le second.’ ”

In this state of suppressed irritation, my grandfather no doubt hailed the departure of the court and garrison from Berlin as a welcome relief from the presence of those whose ill-concealed triumph over England’s humiliation was a daily trial of his patience.

It is impossible to over-estimate the self-control required from a man who, in a moment of national humiliation, is living abroad among governments or nations hostile to his country. Though in secret he may acknowledge her blunders, and lament her policy, to him she is still “an ill-favoured thing, *but mine own* ;” and when her bitterest enemies can triumphantly appeal in support of their assertions to the words of Englishmen at home, it is not unnatural that he should find himself in a position of antagonism to all who, from whatever motives, are unveiling her errors, and proclaiming her weakness. Party tactics, however indispensable to the working of parliamentary Governments, are ill understood on the Continent. Foreigners attach more importance to the statements made in the course of a debate, than to the arguments deduced from them, or the ends to which these are directed ; and when an eloquent

opposition has clearly demonstrated that England has neither admirals nor generals, fleets nor armies, that her counsels are distracted, her people disheartened, and that a state of universal rottenness exists, foreigners are slow to perceive that a mere change of *standpoint*, as the Germans say, will often suffice to make the most despondent of our political seers burst forth into a song of thanksgiving. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob; and thy tabernacles, O Israel!"

We have so many grounds for gratitude to our national institutions, that we can afford to put up with some inconveniences which arise from them; but it is *a bore* that they forbid us to act on Napoleon's advice, to "*laver notre linge sale en famille.*" Europe assists at our periodical lustrations (which generally usher in our greatest undertakings), and when the heat of the struggle is over, and the clouds of steam have evaporated, we are surprised to find her quoting us against ourselves, and proving to demonstration that we have "written ourselves down asses." In the innocence of our hearts we exclaim, "*Qui te l'a dit?*" No such surprise, however, awaits him who has watched the progress of events from a foreign land.

The war known as that of the Bavarian succession broke out in July 1778; and on the 14th of the month Frederick put himself at the head of his army and entered Bohemia.

All the princes of the blood were also in the field. Rheinsberg was left to solitude and silence; and, in the absence of royalties and warriors, the

diplomatists found themselves in unusually advantageous circumstances to *faire l'agréable*.

How far Mr. Elliot profited by these may be guessed by the more frequent mention in his correspondence of the fair Mademoiselle de Krauth.

Letters from travellers returned home inquire tenderly for "la belle des belles," or more irreverently refer to Hugh's taste for "cabbage."

"Beware of Miss Cabbage," writes one, "for she is artful, and knows very well you love her. "If you feed on sprouts," says Sir J. Harris, from the distance of Petersburg, "you will find them hard of digestion." Alarming rumours reach the family in England, and produce good advice from Sir Gilbert, who warns his brother against asking a spoilt young beauty to share with him an income which had never sufficed for him alone! It seems to have been a peculiarity of my grandfather's, that whenever he found he had not enough to live on, he invariably proposed retiring upon nothing; and accordingly his letters at this time abound in plans for giving up a luxurious world, and betaking himself to goatskins, locusts, and wild honey.

The letters to which I have been referring, are, with many more on the same subject, filed and docketted by my grandfather himself. They are by no means the sweepings of desks, or the overlooked contents of portfolios, but, strange as it may seem, have been carefully preserved, and are bound in calfskin in their chronological order, with the date of the year, in gilt letters, on the back of each volume.

Stranger still, we find bound in the same manner the subsequent congratulations of the same writers on his marriage; and, strangest of all! there are among these volumes copies of his own letters containing his first impressions of *Mademoiselle de Krauth*, when regarding her merely as a beautiful girl, *with the manners of Berlin*—which, from his pen, was not a complimentary description.

It is impossible to guess the motives which led to the preservation of such letters as these. Perhaps some of them may have appeared to their receiver as counsels of perfection worthy to be preserved, though too hard to follow. Perhaps the shrewd and caustic remarks on “Miss Cabbage,” contrasted subsequently with the respectful homage of the same writers to the charms and merit of *Madame Elliot*, may have served to elucidate some philosophical theory on the worthlessness of human testimony.

Possibly these letters may have been preserved to be read in penance for the slighting of so much sense, or as proofs that first impressions are best. At all events they *have* been preserved, and those of my friends who have been so much scared by a simple suggestion that even in this world all secrets may become known, should take comfort from the reflection that very few people are at so much trouble as was my grandfather to ensure that none of his should be hid!

That the subject of marriage, though in his mind, was not at this moment contemplated from what we should now call an “*earnest*” point of view, may be gathered from a congratulatory note

to his friend, Marquis de Bombelles, who had lately married.

Hugh Elliot
to Marquis
de Bom-
belles.

"Tout le monde se marie—je commence à être honteux de mon célibat. Dans le siècle où nous sommes il faut ou détruire ou procréer. Il y a des risques à courir dans les deux métiers, nos ennemis gagnent par nos pertes dans le premier, nos amis gagnent quand nous sommes malheureux dans le second."

Berlin, 15th
July.

About this time he wrote to Countess Thun in the following lively strain—"Je n'ose pas me vanter d'être parfaitement heureux ; peut-être y a-t-il de ma faute ; mais malheureusement cela ne console pas. Je suis moins philosophe que je ne l'ai été, au moment qu'il me conviendrait fort de l'être. Je crois que c'est assez le sort de tous les philosophes. On surmonte toutes les passions, toutes les difficultés, quand on n'en a pas ; on succombe tout comme si on n'était pas philosophe quand on en a.

"Berlin me plait infiniment ; on a du loisir, de la liberté, et peu de bruit. La société y est mêlée comme partout ailleurs, il y a du bon et du mauvais, en général la bonhomie y regne plus que la vivacité et l'esprit. Les femmes sont sans talents, sans beauté, et sans graces. Elles n'en jouent pas moins constamment au whist, au manille, et savent rester quâtre heures à souper, au beau milieu de l'été, sans s'apercevoir si leur voisin mange ou dort, cela dépend de lui. On n'est pas de tout obligé d'être aimable, et rien n'est plus commode pour un Anglais ; de tems en tems un officier français nous arrive, la jambe en

l'air, chantant, voltigeant, contant toutes les plaisanteries de l'année passée ou à Paris. Nous en sommes enchantés, nous chantons, nous voltigeons, et nous contons à notre tour, un peu moins légèrement il est vrai, mais on est assez bon pour nous trouver charmants ce jour là et pour en citer l'agrément le reste de l'année. D'ailleurs nous avons des personnes d'une société bien douce, et nous avons des beautés qui le seraient en tout pays."

Writing more confidentially to an English friend, he says—"I wish I could tell you that any Sept. 1778. favourable crisis had taken place in my affairs; they are deep gone in a consumption, and can only be saved by a hearty infusion of *metals*, which are not to be met with. ~~Gently~~ falling with a falling state is the *devise*; it is, however, a poor comfort. I am in Cobentzel's house, perfectly well pleased with it. I am on a very good footing with the world in general; and, though not a little criticised, am, I believe, as well as need be. On the whole, I am more and more attached to Berlin, and shall be very sorry when circumstances oblige me to leave it. The town is very empty and very pleasant." The letter closes with his speculations on the probable conduct and possible consequences of the war between Prussia and Austria, of no interest at the present date; from the scene of war he heard but little, since no officers chose to correspond with foreign ministers. That he himself set no store by the partial and scanty information he received, is plain, by the following extract from a letter to one of his chief correspondents in the camp:—"Votre campagne fait

To Baron
Kaphengst
aide-de-camp
to Prince
Henry, Nov.
1778.

aujourd'hui le sujet de toutes les conversations. On en parle à tort et à travers. Sans trop savoir ce qu'on dit, j'ai justement assez de connaissances militaires pour croire que ceux qui ne savent pas *tout*, ne savent *rien* ; et nous autres Berlinoises et Berlinoises qui nous avisons de tracer vos marches et de décider de vos opérations militaires, méritons parfaitement le mépris avec lequel vous traitez nos savantes discussions."

The distinction gained by the Prince of Prussia in this campaign was particularly grateful to Mr. Elliot, who always experienced cordial kindness at his hands. He says—"The Prince seems to have greatly distinguished himself, and to have merited and obtained a perfect reconciliation with the King—a great event for this country, whose existence depends upon the abilities and harmony of its princes."

No amount of pre-occupation concerning things nearer at hand diverted my grandfather's attention from the fluctuating fortunes of England ; and his letters to his old friend Mr. Pitt, and to Lord J. Clinton, shew how keenly his interest was directed to affairs at home. Mr. Pitt had spent the greater part of the year at the northern courts, studying the governments and manners of other nations, with a view of presently taking an active part in public life at home. "I cannot help thinking," wrote Mr. Elliot to him, "that you devote too much time to a very barren soil. Your own country never was in a greater crisis than at present—never was a moment when more was to be learnt or done. My dear Pitt, with your applica-

6th Nov.
1778.

tion and desire of getting information, London will afford more objects worth your attention in one day, than the Goths and Vandals in years."

On another occasion he wrote to the same friend—"I have had a variety of English of all sorts and sizes. The more I see of them the more I am convinced of the practicability of the *grand design*.* The stuff is there and recruits come in. I sincerely congratulate you upon the final conclusion of your continental excursion. Perhaps I am wrong, but I am every day more and more convinced that the wear and tear of such fatiguing journeys are not balanced by the profit of knowledge acquired, applicable to the theatre of England. We are a world apart. It requires a life of perseverance and application to know that world, and it requires uninterrupted habits of its manners, and constant residence in its atmosphere, for the ablest to act in it. As Rousseau says of himself, that he does not pretend to describe whether he is better or worse than other men, but he is certain *qu'il est autre*,—so may we say of our country. I now consider you as on the point of mounting your *great horse*, I wish you may manage him as you intend."

Hugh Elliot
to Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Pitt's share in this correspondence leads one to suppose that he was possessed of good sense and industrious habits, rather than of remarkable abilities. His letters are chiefly inter-

* See 1st chapter. The *design* referred to was to form a band of "*true patriots*," who should devote all their energies to the furtherance in Parliament of certain grand objects, such as Catholic emancipation, internal reforms, etc. etc.

esting from the light they throw on the character of his friend ; and though they occasionally savour slightly of a mentor's tone, and confess their writer to have been of opinion that his correspondent might be improved by acting "a little more like other two-legged creatures," they, nevertheless, testify to his sincere regard and admiration for Hugh Elliot.

The comments which Mr. Pitt makes on his opinions and manners give a lively impression of the inconsistencies which alternately attracted and provoked his friends. A passionate lover of glory, he held in contempt the applause of the little world in which he lived. "You carry your contempt of the Qu'en dira-t-on too far," said Mr. Pitt. "I agree with you in despising actions performed for the sake of obtaining applause; but the good opinion of our friends and countrymen ought to be grateful to us."

Disregarding the good fortune which had placed him, at the age of twenty-six, in a great and responsible situation, he scarcely affected to conceal his disgust with the manners of the society to which that situation introduced him ; and this very dislike to the general tone of society threw him all the more readily into a small clique of clever, well-bred, but unprincipled people, to whom his imagination lent perfections which they never possessed.

So indolent were his bodily habits, that his friends talk of his sofa as part of himself ; yet his activity of mind was unfailing ; all intellectual subjects had an interest for him. Politics never

spoilt his taste for literature and science ; and his powers of conversation made his society to be sought after by many of the most distinguished persons of his time. His spirits seem to have been equally uncontrollable in their glee and their depression—"spirits," says Mr. Pitt, "such as when on hearing of that great and total defeat of Gates' army by Burgoyne, you threw a whole basin of milk over me"*—spirits such as those, which, when excited to anger, had led to his enforcing a practical application of England's power on a triumphant and insolent foe!

The story is told thus: A vulgar Frenchman who had just heard of the acknowledgment by France of the independence of America, came up to my grandfather, and thrusting his face in that of the English minister, said with a sneer—"Voilà un fameux soufflet que la France a donné à l'Angleterre." "Et voilà le soufflet que l'Angleterre rend à la France par ma main!" exclaimed the representative of England, accompanying the words with a stinging box on the ear.

Mr. Brydone had, in Ratisbon days, remarked on Hugh Elliot's singular power of communicating to others some of his own high spirit, and ardent desire to serve his country.

That he continued to urge on his friends the duty of exertion in public life, is shewn in the following extract from a letter to Lord J. Clinton, who

* On the 19th September 1777, General Burgoyne attacked Gates' army on Behmus heights, and forced their position. This was probably the action reported at home as a great and decisive victory. Mr. Pitt was averse to the American war.

was just completing a tour of the chief capitals of Europe, having, according to the regular routine, assisted at Prussian reviews, Viennese assemblies, and Parisian balls, and fallen desperately in love with Princess Frederick of Brunswick :—"My dear Lord—Rank, fortune, abilities, are yours; do not run the dull, idle, tasteless course of your contemporaries; the times, your country, ask for exertion. Pray, remember that Britain is your theatre, and your situation enables you to play the part on it you are fitted for—that of a warm, steady, and judicious patriot. *We* are exiles without influence; you may touch the main-spring."

Lord J. Clinton's letters are easily and pleasantly written, but do not display any conspicuous talent. On the 8th December, soon after having taken his seat in Parliament, he writes—"As I have attended my duty to Parliament some days, I can give you some little account of our miserable situation. Opposition paint it in very strong colours. Government allow that it is critical. Charles Fox, with his usual vehemence of oratory, declares that he sees the inconvenience of clogging the wheels of government by opposition at this moment; but at the same time says he thinks it his duty so to do, that we may by this means get rid of such a weak, wicked, etc., ministry. Government is daily excessively abused, but at the close of the debate has always a very considerable majority; people have not a better opinion of opposition than of government, and therefore choose to side with the latter; perhaps also, the loaves and fishes make converts. Yesterday there was a

1778.

Lord J. Clinton
to Hugh
Elliot.

debate in the House of Lords, during which Opposition used every argument to encourage America.

. . . I will now tell you what I think of our manner of living here. I cannot say that I much like it; people look so very cold and uninteresting, that I never go into company without returning *de très mauvaise humeur*. The women are very beautiful, but few of them have *des physiognomies intéressantes*; and they know they are handsome, and expect great adoration.

"I wish you were here; absence is the most powerful cure for love. Some other object presents itself, and what with politics and present occupations, you grow by degrees much cooler for the one that is miles distant. You will say, 'This man does not know what love is!' I maintain, however, that my way of treating the subject is the pleasantest and the most philosophical."*

After hearing of the debates which had lately taken place in Parliament, on the conduct of Admiral Keppel, and Sir Hugh Palliser, and of General Burgoyne and Sir H. Clinton, Mr. Elliot wrote to this correspondent as follows—

"I am surprised at the weakness of the minister, in permitting talking generals and wrangling admirals to lower the dignity of the House in the eyes of all Europe, by making it a mere receptacle of abuse, peevishness, disappointment,

H. Elliot to
Lord J. Clinton,
Dec. 19

* Lord John Clinton is mentioned in Madame d'Arblay's diary among the frequenters of Mrs. Thale's society; and is described in 1780 as "a very well-informed and modest-mannered boy, ugly, lively, and amiable." He died of consumption at Lisbon in 1781; and it is hinted in the letters that his fate was hastened by a disappointment in love.

and jealousy. What a perversion of the nature of the House, to make it a court of appeal to judge of the propriety or impropriety of Burgoyne's being admitted to an audience in presence of the King!*

Burgoyne's want of conduct as a general is so apparent, that I am at a loss to account for his not being dismissed the service. Can anything be more trifling in this important moment than to throw away time in cavilling about signals, and wakes, and a sea cannonade, which, by its consequence, does not deserve the name of a battle?† Nothing, in my idea, can be more trifling, except the learned and humane discussions of Opposition on the degree of mercy we are to shew a victorious enemy!‡ There is too much wrangling at home. Our most sacred, or what ought to be our most sacred secrets, are sacrificed to what is called the *honour* of a few individuals. Courts-martial and inquiries are the best spies foreigners can wish for."

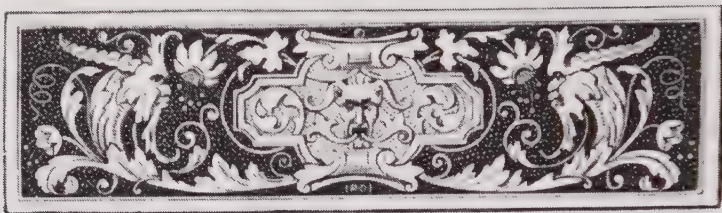
"It is a remarkable feature of these times," says Lord Mahon, "that the leading admirals and generals of the war were also, for the most part, Members of Parliament; that throughout the spring of 1779, we find not only Admiral Keppel and Sir Hugh Palliser, but also Lord and Sir William Howe, and General Burgoyne, able themselves to allege their grievances or defend their

* In a debate on the 26th May—*Walpole's last Journals*, vol. ii. p. 272.

† Debates on the conduct of Admiral Keppel and Sir Hugh Palliser.

‡ Debate of 4th December—Lord Rockingham's motion on Sir H. Clinton's proclamation.

conduct. In some of these cases there were committees of inquiry, and examination of witnesses, but in none any clear or positive parliamentary result. These altercations, in the full details, could not fail to interest, because they inflamed the party spirit of the day."



CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

1778 to 1779.

IN the course of 1778, the Dowager Lady Elliot's illness took so serious a turn that her life was despaired of. She, however, rallied sufficiently to be removed to Bristol, where it was hoped that the air and waters might produce temporary amendment, though recovery was no longer deemed possible.

Writing from Clifton in September, Isabella says—"The summer has passed very calmly and serenely. We are living in a beautiful country, and I have learnt philosophy enough neither to reflect too much upon what is past, or look too much into futurity. Bob is of the greatest consolation to us. You will hear with pleasure that he has been preaching with great success here. He preached at the cathedral (of Bristol), and acquitted himself so well that the mayor desired him to preach the assize sermon, which is their great day in the year. His sermon was a very good one, and his manner and delivery were much admired; but I own, it seemed not a little

strange to me to hear Bob lecturing the judge and corporations with just dignity."

Bob was a poet as well as a preacher, and some of his effusions were at this time offered to the acceptance of the goddess of Bath-Easton.*

In the course of September arrived letters from America, which give so interesting an account of the first impressions made by that country on the minds of Mr. and Mrs. Eden, that I shall insert them at full length.

From Mr. EDEN.

" Philadelphia, June 15, 1778.

" My Dear Hugh—After a six weeks' voyage between the anchorage off St. Helen's and that off Cape Henlopen, we arrived in the Delaware on the 2d instant, and at this place on the 6th. I have hitherto seen no more of the country than appears in the passage of 150 miles up the river, but I have seen enough to regret from the bottom of my heart ten thousand times, that our rulers, instead of a tour through the enervated and worn out countries of Europe, had not finished their educations with a visit round the coasts and rivers of this beautiful and boundless continent. The scale of everything here makes me fancy myself in Brobdignag. The English rivers and mountains are mere rills and molehills. This city has the appearance at present of nothing better than a wide and very opulent village; but it is so situ-

* Lady Miller, who lived at Bath-Easton. See *Walpole's Letters*:—Memoir of Mrs. Delany.

ated, that a few years hence will turn it into a magnificent metropolis. There are not above 23,000 inhabitants left here, and about 16,000 troops, the British part of which are agreed by all the military men, however differing in other points, to be, in every respect of dress, discipline, health, activity, and alertness, the finest fellows ever collected in the world. Washington's camp is about twenty miles from us upon the Schuylkill, and by the best account he has about 10,000 men. . . .

"We mean to leave this to-morrow and to proceed to New York; after which this city will be immediately evacuated. . . . Near 300 ships will sail about the same time that we do—a fine sight, though on recollection of all circumstances, not a flattering one! . . . I am not at liberty to enter into the subject of what we are doing on this side of the Atlantic.

" . . . and now, before I conclude, I must say something of our excellent Eleanor. She had occasion on the voyage to see every little incident of alarm that a ship of war can shew, and went through the whole with all the courage of the commodore himself, and indeed with more composure, as he was often alarmed for her.

"We had some exceedingly rough weather; we had a lightning and thunder night on this coast too, which exceeds anything that you can form an idea of in Europe; we had frequent occasion to clear the vessel as if for action, and sometimes to fire signal guns in the middle of the night. At one time an immense wave broke upon the side of the ship, and forcing the windows of Mrs. Eden's

cabin (where she was lying on the bed, there being too much motion to sit or stand), completely ducked her. The commodore and I were present, and did not like the situation at all ; but Eleanor was seized with a very hearty fit of laughing at her own figure, and at the commodore's coat-pockets, which stood open, and were full of water."

In a letter of the same date, and containing nearly the same matter, addressed by Mr. Eden to Sir Gilbert, the following passage occurs :—

"I cannot with propriety enter into any detail ^{June 15, 1778.} of our politics. On my arrival here I found that some measures had been taken in England (above three weeks previous to my departure), which, contrary to all good faith and good sense, were concealed from me, and which, in other respects, affect both my public and private feelings. At present I will intimate what I have now written to you only to the Duke of Marlborough, the Solicitor-General, and Sir P. Yorke. I find my colleagues perfectly honourable, steady, and right-headed."

The measures referred to were the evacuation of Philadelphia and retreat to New York—of which the commissioners were in perfect ignorance when they arrived in the Delaware.

Considering the relations which had so long subsisted between Lord North and Mr. Eden, considering too the very delicate negotiation which had been confided to him immediately before he left England, the reticence practised towards him seems incomprehensible.

Mrs. EDEN to ISABELLA.

Philadelphia.

"My dearest Sister—After a pleasant six hours' sail up the river, I arrived at Philadelphia, quite out of my senses with joy at finding myself once more on dry land ; and what added not a little to my satisfaction was, the seeing women walking about the streets with children in their arms—a sight I have not seen since I left England. I really could have ate them up almost, I was so delighted to find anything that brought my little angel so strongly to my mind.

"I found the account we had heard of so much apparent distress in the town perfectly false ; indeed, it is quite impossible to believe, by the people's faces, and the extreme quietness of the town, but that you are not in a city perfectly at peace, and at ease. As to security, I feel quite as safe here as if I was in my own dressing-room in Downing Street. We have got into a most excellent house, and very civil, obliging people. I cannot help pitying them most sincerely for being obliged to receive us, which is the case, as they are desired to furnish us so many rooms—of course their best—and they retire into a corner. However, that does not seem to hurt them ; my landlady likes it extremely, as she informs me she is fond of company, and so I receive all mine in her room. The people's spirits were much raised by the arrival of the commissioners, as they flattered themselves it would put an end to the alarming report of the town being to be evacuated. The women here talk no-

thing but politics ; and, indeed, it is impossible they should do otherwise, as the whole welfare of their families, fortunes, and lives, depends upon the turn affairs may take. The ladies tell me that they much fear the commission will do no good now. They say, if Philadelphia is left and given up to the rebels, that independence is declared, and America lost ; and that they who have been friends to Government are in a most dreadful situation. It appears certainly a most melancholy thing to desert this large city, which very far surpasses any idea I had of it, and all the country is most beautiful.

“ We have left Philadelphia, and are once more on board the Trident in the river Delaware. To-morrow, I suppose, we shall weigh anchor and proceed to New York. I shall be delighted to see my uncle’s family. I hear he is beloved by all parties. I passed all the night before last in an open boat, and had no place to lie on but the boards ; nevertheless, I am not one bit the worse, though I was much afraid now and then, as we were so near the enemy’s shore. We could hear the people on the watch calling to each other, and every little while I thought we should have been fired at. All the vessels are this moment sailing by the cabin windows, at such a rate, that I suppose by this time the town is deserted by our army. You cannot conceive a more beautiful, nor a more melancholy sight than the one at present before me. Imagine the most beautiful view you ever saw, fine woods on each side, the richest country in the world—imagine this river covered

with vessels in full sail, as thick as possible, crowded with people, leaving the city where they have been born and bred, flying from an enemy, which enemy may consist of relations and friends, leaving their whole property and all their fortunes but what they can carry with them. It is indeed a most horrible scene !

P. S. (apparently added at New York)—
“Beef and mutton are 26s. per pound; porter, 3s. a bottle. In short, how the poor inhabitants live I cannot imagine; indeed, description would fall far short of it all.”

Mr. EDEN to HUGH.

“New York, July 15.

“We are blockaded by a French fleet, which at this moment is immeasurably superior to ours. The spirit, however, of our people in this mortifying moment is very comforting to a civil observer like me.

“The soldiery are all running to the navy, with the leave of the Commander-in-Chief; and our fleet such as it is, is most completely manned. Before these armaments separate, if we can give the account of those perfidious and profligate Frenchmen that we hope and wish, our honour and interests may once more be established on this side of the Atlantic. We have 26,000 troops in these islands. It is well you are not here; Eleanor says you would be mad. Your uncle the commodore is second in command under Lord Howe. Your other uncle, Mr. Andrew Elliot, is a very

sensible and respectable man ; he has a beautiful place about two miles from this town, where Eleanor and I occasionally sleep. He has a very numerous family, and will be totally ruined if we cannot recover our affairs; yet he is perfectly cheerful."*

In so far as they relate to private concerns, these letters are full of cheerfulness, and the hope that their writers would soon be restored to their own country gave a further stimulus to the spirits of the Dowager Lady Elliot and her daughter.

In November they moved to Bath, where they were soon joined by all the members of the family in England. It was the final gathering before the scene dropped. For some time previously, Lady Elliot had been pained by her inability to write to her absent son Hugh. Once more, however, about a fortnight before her death, the effort was made, and the result is a very long and tender letter, which conveyed to him the last expressions of his mother's love before it was silenced for ever.

On New Year's Day 1779, Sir Gilbert wrote to his brother, that on the 28th of the preceding month their mother's spirit had passed away. Grievously afflicted with bodily ills, "she, nevertheless, waited with composure for the last stroke. At times she conversed pretty cheerfully with her family, informed herself with wonderfully minute solicitude of all that could in the smallest matters concern those whom she loved. Her conversation

* A short time after the date of this letter, Mr. Eden's second daughter was born—Catherine-Isabella.

was strong and lively ; her Christian faith and submission perfect. My poor sister was never from her heart ; and if anything still attached her to life, and made the hour she looked for otherwise than joyful, it was the pang of parting with her. I need not tell you that she often talked of you."

Another era in Hugh's life was closed. Much love and much happiness were in store for him in future years ; but the all-enduring, all-hoping, all-believing affection, which had sheltered his childhood, and gloried in his youth, was gone from him for ever !

Isabella went home from Bath to her brother's house, and "nothing," she wrote, "can exceed their tender kindness to me."

Shortly afterwards Sir Gilbert was suddenly summoned to Scotland, in consequence of an announcement that Lord Robert Kerr would stand for the county at the next general election ; but the Duke of Buccleuch continued to give his support to Sir Gilbert, who was in a short time able to write to his brother, that it was "singularly fortunate that circumstances, not to be commanded by me, have given me an independent seat for this county, in the midst of such enormous estates and so powerful interests."

In the course of the spring, Isabella was able to resume in some degree the usual style of her correspondence with her brother ; she tells him of the marriage of her friend Lady Priscilla Bertie to Mr. Burrel.—"The Duke of Ancaster returns again to America, to the great grief of his mother, who, if he was not so wild, would be quite happy at the

marriage of Lady Priscilla to Mr. Burrel, which was so violent an inclination as totally to engross their hearts. I believe he is a very good kind of man, but somewhat coxcombical in his habits. Miss Julia Burrel, the only sister unmarried, is shortly to be married to Lord Piercy, who has resigned the staff. Lord Harrington died last night, which makes a great change to Lord Petersham, whose marriage with Miss Fleming has been deferred on account of his great debts. She has behaved vastly well—she pays all his, as well as Mr. Stanhope's debts. I think, however, one may use the Scriptural expression on this subject,—‘That it is better to give than to receive.’ Lord Cathcart is going to marry a daughter of Mr. Andrew Elliot, a pretty, sensible girl, with whom he fell in love at New York. There has not been one tolerable or endurable play or poem this winter. There is a charming pamphlet called ‘Anticipation,’ which was published some time ago, and if you have not seen it, it will amuse you. Keppel has been at Bath, and has led a procession of old ladies from one end of the town to the other, has marched with them, and they had all blue flags in their caps, and musick playing, and gave him a ball which must have been ridiculous enough—he is the hero of the mob this winter, and many windows have been broken in his honour.”

The news of a “drubbing” given to d’Estaing’s fleet off St. Lucia, and the success of an expedition to Georgia, produce a letter from Mr. Eden, who, with his wife, had returned to England in Decem-

ber (before Lady Elliot's death, but not in time to see her). "The opposition," he says, "are sincerely sorry for this good news—they confess this in private without reserve—and in public during the two last days' debates have not once named either St. Lucia or Georgia."

In April 1779 arrived the unexpected intelligence of Alick's death in India. A putrid fever carried him off while on a journey to Nagpore, the capital of the Mahrattas, where he had been sent on a political mission of importance. His death was a severe blow to his family, who had conceived the highest hopes of his future career from the singular combination of mental and personal qualities which formed his character. To abilities calculated to make him play a leading part on the political stage, he united a strong will and a sweet temper. His untimely fate called forth unusual expressions of regret, and a glowing tribute to his distinguished qualities was paid by Mr. Burke in the House of Commons.

This second bereavement, so soon following on the death of his mother, came with overwhelming force on Hugh, who had in the short interval between those two events been deeply though less severely tried by the loss of two of his friends,—Lord Suffolk, whose kindness had never flagged, and Mr. Harvey, his most intimate companion. "These two last years have robbed me of father, mother, brother, patron, and friends. I am sixty years old in losses of everything dear to me!"

Thus deprived of the objects of his earliest

affections, he began to feel all the more the necessity of forming new ties.

"M. Elliot," says Thiébault, "était devenu éperdument amoureux de Mademoiselle Krauth;" her mother was supposed by him to object strongly to her marriage with a foreigner, and with one whose uncertain prospects and small private fortune had been disclosed unreservedly to her by himself. In the course of the previous year several notes had passed between them, on the subject of his attentions to her daughter, but the line of argument adopted by Madame de Verelst to dissuade him from their continuance, seems singularly ill-fitted to attain its ostensible object; she repeatedly requests him to avoid her daughter's society, on the ground that the young lady was becoming seriously attached to him, and that the strength of her feelings for him had already made her unhappy, and had prevented her from accepting an excellent "*parti*" which her mother had in store for her! Other notes dwell on the remarks to which his open devotion had given rise, and which were "*compromettant*" for her daughter. Madame de Verelst may possibly have thought the young Englishman a model of prudence and of self-abnegation; he was, however, unfortunately more remarkably distinguished for a romantic and chivalrous nature, upon which the arguments she used were certain to produce an opposite effect from that which she professed to desire. If anything had been needed to rivet his chains, it must have been the assurance that Mademoiselle Krauth was unhappy, "*pour lui et par lui.*"

1779.

Early in July he wrote to Sir J. Harris to announce his immediate return on leave to England, for the purpose of preparing his family for the declaration of his marriage, which, in order to provide against all possible machinations during his absence, took place privately, without her mother's consent, before his departure for Berlin. The withholding of Madame de Verelst's consent may have been intended to deprecate the king's displeasure when it should be hereafter known that a marriage had been contracted between her daughter, a Prussian subject and an heiress, without his previous consent—for it does not appear that their marriage was ever a secret from her. However this may have been, Mr. Elliot wrote to Sir James Harris as follows:—"I am married in private, without the mother's consent, to the Krauth; after the éclât of my attachment to her, I had the choice between folly and dishonesty—my affections pleaded for the first, my conscience forbade the latter. On my part there is very sincere affection, bad health, poverty, and the other defects of character which nature has bestowed on me, and which art has never tried to conquer; on hers, there is youth, beauty, and strong parts. My project is to keep the matter secret till the king's death.* The Prince of Prussia, Prince Henry, etc., are as much my friends as princes can be. I despise the world too much to fear its vicissitudes, and think her worth sacrificing life and fortune to, if necessary."

Mr. Elliot to
Sir J. Harris.

* He was certain to object to her fortune passing into the hands of a foreigner.

He did not question that the idol was one to whom the incense of such sacrifices would be as sweet perfumes.

"Prudence, reason, calculation of possibles," wrote my grandfather to some one else at this time, not, however, with any other than a mental reference to the subject of his marriage,—*"these are the crutches with which feeble minds halt through life. I have but one rule—to do that which my conscience says is right, let the consequences be what they may."* Unluckily, when the first steps were taken in this unhappy business, my grandfather's conscience seems to have been *"en bas de l'escalier,"* as a Frenchman said his wit was when most wanted, and prudence and reason had taken to flight before it appeared on the scene.

His friends at Petersburg and at home certainly believed that the marriage had been desired by the young lady's friends from the first moment of Mr. Elliot's arrival at Berlin, and that he himself never shared in this opinion, and that Madame de Verelst succeeded in gaining and in preserving his entire confidence and esteem, are arguments which in no wise affect the view of the matter entertained by his friends, since all the trust and confidence which he withheld from persons indifferent to or distasteful to him, were reserved to be added to the brimming measure which he gave to those he loved. Clear-sighted to a fault, even suspicious of the motives of the generality of the world, he was credulous as a child where his affections were concerned; his correspondents perpetually warn him

not to believe and confide in precisely those whose society he affected the most.

The summer and part of the winter of 1779 were spent by Mr. Elliot in England; we therefore lose sight of him for a while, except in the letters written to him by Isabella and Sir Gilbert from Minto, many of which shew them to have been anxiously expecting him there, but the meeting did not take place till winter recalled the Elliots to their house in Lincoln's Inn.

My grandfather's absence from his post brings Mr. Liston again on the scene, and we find him very soon at his old employment, remonstrating, pacifying, excusing, and receiving confidence from all sides.

"Si j'avais un amant qui voulut de mes lettres tous les jours, je romprais avec lui!" said Madame de la Fayette. Mr. Elliot would have been a lover after her heart, but unhappily the lady of his love was not of the same mind; and when, as too frequently happened, the English post came in without anything for her, she was at first distressed, and then provoked. Mr. Liston pacified her with explanations of his own invention, not probably venturing to interpret to her what Sir Gilbert calls "the family paradox—how possible it is to neglect abominably those we love truly and dearly;" but to his chief, Mr. Liston wrote almost sharply on the mischief which his indolence might cause.

Having done all he could to prevent the marriage, he now did his best to make it happy. "It is impossible to make him believe she has no just

Mr. Liston to
Hugh Elliot.

grounds of complaint ; she cannot understand that a man will make the greatest sacrifices for her sake, and yet cannot overcome his habitual indolence."

Luckily for us, Mr. Liston wrote of other things besides love. The following extracts from his letters are selected, as containing characteristic anecdotes of the great King. On the 29th May, he describes the King's return to Berlin from the army :—"The King arrived here on Thursday at three o'clock ; came in by the Königs-strasse, and drove straight to the palace. The people made little or no noise, because they knew he does not like it. They pretend a woman threw herself on her knees before him, as he stepped out of the coach. 'Was will sie?' said he ; no answer. 'Was will sie denn?' no answer. He then asked a third time. 'Ich freue mich,' said she. He made a bow to her, and seemed affected, as were the spectators. A few Frenchmen, standing at the bottom of the stair, called out, 'Vive le Roi!' on which he turned about, smiled, and said, '*Bravo!*' All the foreign ministers, nobility, etc., had been assembled from ten o'clock to wait for him. He did not go into the room they were in, but joined his generals and Prince Ferdinand in the other room. After embracing his brother, and saying a few words to three of his generals, he retired, and ordered dinner immediately. After dinner he stood nearly three hours in one of the windows with Schulenburg, looking over papers and doing business. A great crowd gathered together in the *Place* to stare at him. He wrote to the Queen, saying he could not see her that day, he had so much to do, but that

Mr. Liston to
Hugh Elliot.

il lui demanderait à diner le Dimanche. Yesterday he went in his pristine *state* coach to visit Princess Amelie. I saw him pass under the trees ; he looks much better than when I saw him last ; and, they say, enjoys perfect health and spirits. Prince Henry arrived yesterday ; the King received him, contrary to the general expectation, with great cordiality, and talked long to him with perfect good humour. The King continues to treat the Prince of Prussia with great cordiality and affection."

The Sunday dinner at the Queen's residence of Charlottenburg, mentioned in the foregoing letter produced the following characteristic anecdote :—

Mr. Liston to
Hugh Elliot.

"When the King asked all the royal family to dine with him at Charlottenburg, he invited (or he was understood to invite) all the grandes maitresses at the same time ; so that Madame de Kannenberg, Madame de Blumenthal, etc., went. Princess Ferdinand having no grande maitresse, carried Madame de Stockhausen ; and Mademoiselle de Viereck went by way of gouvernante to the little Princess of Prussia. The Queen and Madame de Kannenberg were there some time before the rest. 'Mon ancienne et bonne amie,' said the King to Madame de Kannenberg, 'I am very glad to see you ; but'—observing the two ladies who had just entered—'who are these ?' She told him, 'Stockhausen, Viereck.'—'Je ne connais point cela moi. Qu'est-ce-que cela vient faire ici ? c'est de la contre bande ; elles ne peuvent pas diner ici ces femmes-là. Je n'ai voulu avoir que les grandes maitresses, qu'elles s'en retournent : qu'on les renvoie.'—'Mais Sire, elles sont venues

avec les Princesses, elles n'ont point de voiture, elles ne peuvent pas s'en aller. Si votre Majesté le permet, on leur donnera à diner dans un autre appartement.' 'A la bonne heure;' and this was accordingly done. 'Eh bien, Madame de Kannenberg,' when dinner was done, 'qu'avez-vous fait de votre Madame de Stockhausen et de l'autre.' 'Sire, je les ai mises dans une autre chambre.'—'He! he! he! elles sont fort bien là—à leur place.'"

This trait of discourtesy is followed by a graver charge of harshness, carried to extremes, which produced a fatal result, in the tragical death of a certain Major Appenbourg, who commanded, last campaign, the grenadiers, composed of the Battalion of Guards and of the regiment of the Prince of Prussia. "They were at Jägerndorff in winter, and there was considerable desertion. The King, before leaving Silesia, found great fault with this, and the major decided upon returning to Berlin, but was often heard to say, *his resolution was taken*. On his arrival, his Majesty said some harsh things to him, on which he went home, wrote a letter to the King, which he left on his table, and shot himself. The letter was carried to the King, who is said to have been much shocked. It had been a long premeditated affair. He has left everything in excellent order."

Mr. Liston to
Hugh Elliot.

A visit of Mr. Liston's to M. de Hertzberg's country residence affords some curious details concerning the simple, though peculiar tastes and manners of a favourite minister of the great Frederick. M. de Hertzberg had, at various times, conducted important diplomatic transactions; and at

the time of my grandfather's residence at Berlin, was associated with the venerable Count Finckenstein in the administration of foreign affairs. Frederick held him in high esteem, as he was one of the few personal friends of a sovereign who was more admired than beloved. During the King's last illness M. de Hertzberg attended him, and held him in his arms at the moment of death. It is said that the new king, on arriving at the death-bed of his uncle, was so touched by the unaffected grief of the old and faithful friend attending there, that his first act of sovereignty was to take from his own breast the order of the black eagle, which he habitually wore, and to place it on the neck of M. de Hertzberg, who very soon afterwards became his first minister, and was accused by the French party of fostering *anti-French* sentiments in the new king's mind.

Mr. Liston to
Hugh Elliot.

"*July 27, 1775.*—I have spent a day with M. de Hertzberg, who was here, and am exceedingly pleased with his farm and his farming, which is on a large scale, and is conducted (with a view to profit) with all the minuteness of attention required in agriculture, and so seldom found in any but those who have been bred to the business from their youth. He knows every cow by her name, and how many quarts of milk are sold every day.* The manner in which he talks to his boors, and the familiarity and bluntness with which they answer him, depose strongly in favour of his good

* The milk was sold daily by dairy-maids, on the flight of steps leading to the entrance hall.

sense ; and the manner in which he lives, leaves no doubt of his opulence. . . . He had no company with him, and his housekeeper and servants did not seem to think it probable I was to have the honour of dining with him, as I arrived on foot ; so that we sat down exactly to the dinner prepared for *him*, which was sufficient to satisfy appetite, but as homely as I should have found it at one of my neighbour farmer's houses in Scotland, and the cloth hardly so clean. The drink, brown and white beer, of his own brewing, and one single glass of wine. His dress* was still plainer than it is in town, and a small round hat, his hair hanging loose and without powder. Nothing ever brought so strongly to one's memory Curius Dentatus roasting his turnips, or the Dictator ab aratro. But I could have wished that these stories had not been so conspicuously painted in his apartments, for it has the appearance of comparing himself to those men, which would not do. When he touched on politics it was with his usual openness. He regretted not having been sent to make the peace of Tetschen, in which case he thinks many things would have been more favourable to Prussia. There is no doubt of his favourable disposition to us, but he is, like others, led away by Mahlzahl's opposition account of the distracted state of the ministry and the nation, and by the false views held up in the '*Courier de l'Europe*' and other foreign gazettes." In other letters Mr. Liston describes the sentiments enter-

* Usually manufactured of silk spun by the worms on his own mulberry plantations.

Mr. Liston to
Hugh Elliot.

tained by the Prussian nation towards the French as anything but friendly, in spite of the well-known dispositions of the court; and he mentions having been charged by various persons to send them the earliest news of any success which the English might obtain at sea over the French,—as for society, he says, “there is nothing new under the sun—Monday a pique-nique, Thursday an assembly; the same parties arranged at cards; the ~~titles~~ placed on the same individual spot as when you last saw them; the same figures dancing; but of these, if you were here, you would take notice of none *but one*. That one in public behaves so as to give satisfaction to the most jealous lover, though she certainly does not give equal satisfaction to the poor devil who happens to be her partner. She often speaks to him with such coldness and such nonchalance that I, an indifferent spectator, am apt to be angry. There are the usual dinners at this minister’s and at that minister’s—who has seen one has seen all. If I look under the trees I see Pons or Fontana stalking along to go out to the park, or Dolgorouki sitting strangely on the top of a horse; or the very same figures crowding out on a Sunday which we have looked at a hundred times.”

Before the year closed Mr. Liston had it in his power to tell my grandfather a story which was the nine days’ wonder of Berlin at the time, and became the subject of discussion and criticism throughout Europe; it will be found at length in the 2d vol. of Thiébault’s *Memoirs*, page 20—but to make the following letters intelligible it

will be necessary to give it shortly here:—A miller named Arnold, residing in a village in Pomerania, had presented a memorial to the King some year or so before, in which it was stated that he, the complainant, rented of the King a water mill for 300 reisdollars, but that in consequence of the stream having been directed from its natural channel by the orders of Count N——, the miller's works were stopped, the rent was not forthcoming, and the man was starving. The King sent the memorial to the chancellor, with the order that justice should be done to the miller; the cause was tried, and the miller lost it. The following year a second memorial was presented by the miller to the King, stating that though his case had been lost, the facts were nevertheless as he had stated them. Again the King referred the document to the chancellor, with the command that the cause should be tried before the second tribunal, and that justice should be done—the second trial had the same result as the first; and a third time the miller in despair appealed to the King. Frederick upon this determined to inquire for himself into the facts of the case; and on the report of persons carefully selected, to verify on the spot the statements of the miller, the King became convinced that an act of gross injustice had been committed, and what ensued will be told best by Mr. Liston.

“On Saturday last His Majesty sent for the chancellor (M. le Baron de Fürst) and the three chancellors who presided at the Court of Appeal, and after reprimanding them very severely for

their judgment, he told the chancellor he was dismissed from his office, and that his place was disposed of. The chancellors were sent to the prison of the Carlshof, which you will remember is the *Newgate* of this part of the world; Fürst wanted to speak, but was ordered to be silent and to withdraw. "*Marschirt ab*" was the word, and none of the civilest. Some say the King's illness has made him peevish; others, that his patience had been exhausted by the examples he had lately seen of the quirks and chicanery of the law, to which he had vainly hoped to put a stop.

"To be sure if the case were exactly as the king represents it, it would not bear an argument. A person lets a mill to another, situated on a stream mentioned in the agreement, and afterwards turns aside the stream for other purposes, and still insists on the same rent—nothing more unjust; but they say the fact is, the small portion of water turned aside did no essential harm to the tenant's mill; that the possessor of another, a little higher up on the same stream, makes no complaints, and carries on his business as formerly; that the miller is a *mauvais sujet* who wanted to quarrel with the proprietor, etc., etc. The chancellor talks in a very manly way on the subject; he says he cannot blame the King, as he acts as he thinks he ought to do, and considers the judgment given as unjust; but that he cannot help saying His Majesty pretends to judge of matters he does not understand, and decides without having weighed the circumstances of the case. The president and counsellors of the chamber of Custrin who judged

in the first instance are sent for by a detachment of troops. The president is Count Finckenstein's son (Finckenstein was the minister for foreign affairs). The King has written to Count Finckenstein saying he was sorry to be obliged to dismiss his son for an act of injustice, but that an example was necessary. He could have wished it might have fallen on another family rather than his. The Count is reported to have said, 'Je plains les honnêtes gens ; je plains le Roi.'

"What is very remarkable in a country like this, is, that the whole town have been to pay their compliments of condolence to Fürst and M. de Finckenstein, even Prince Henry and Princess Amelia sent."

In his next letter Mr. Liston says—"In any other country such a story as I told you in my last would produce some effect ; here they talk pretty freely for a few days ; and that is all. Words indeed are not spared by the country gentlemen, and the nobility here, 'precipitate, unjust, despotic,' fly about. The vulgar admire. The King is better, in good spirits, et se moque de qu'en dira-t-on."

Thiébault tells us the sequel of the story thus —"Six months after the events above related, Frederick discovered that he had been in error ; the stream in dispute having been diverted below the mill by a proprietor residing on its banks ; the miller had therefore no just grounds of complaint, and law and justice had been equally outraged by the interference of the king. But, though convinced of his error, Frederick made no other sign

Thiébault sé-
jour de 20 ans
à Berlin.

of being so than by withdrawing the magistrates from their prison, reinstating them in their places, and dropping the prosecution of the proprietor supposed to have injured his humble neighbour."

1779-80.

Mr. Elliot made his marriage known to his family on his arrival in England. Sir Gilbert and Lady Elliot heard the news with their usual affectionate kindness,—whatever doubts they may previously have entertained of the wisdom of the step which Hugh had taken, now that it was irrevocable, they were ready to say, "what must be we cannot change, and will not fear." A cordial welcome was promised to "Charlotte" when she should come to claim a home among them, and Sir Gilbert entered warmly into his brother's dreams of future rustication among the glens and burns of Scotland. Poor Berlin beauty! how she would have shuddered had she heard these projects of burying her *au fonds de l'Ecosse* with a husband and his family *pour tout potage*. "I long to see your wife," says Mrs. Eden, "but how am I to talk to her? I cannot speak French!" "Ah Hugh! Hugh!" wrote Mrs. Harris from St. Petersburg; "do you remember four years ago how you used to abuse all women, and say if ever you married you would live in St. James' Street, and your wife in Berkeley Square?"

Isabella, of all the family, was perhaps the one most affected by her brother's marriage,—alike in their dispositions and tastes, and full of romantic admiration for each other, they had kept up a constant correspondence with the most unreserved confidence; and while Hugh formed no closer ties,

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Isabella could feel that her affection and sympathy were no less necessary to him than they had ever been. Poor Isabella's part was a hard one; she had been the object of her mother's love,—“It was,” wrote one of the family, “an idolatry calculated to ruin any character less sweet than hers;” and from this exclusive devotion she had now to decline on the affections of those warmly attached to her indeed, but the first place in whose hearts was not theirs to give. Such changes have soured many; but whatever were Isabella's secret feelings, she came forward, warmly and cheerfully, to welcome her new sister, and quietly dropping out of her correspondence to her brother those half-unconscious self-revealings which are never written for more than one, she continued in her usual cheerful, pleasant strain to tell him of all things likely to interest him and his wife. Every now and then a passing remark that her “letters are dull because she knows nothing now,”—“no one tells her anything now,”—falls sadly on the ear, but she passes lightly on, and writes fully and frequently of the affectionate thoughtfulness for her manifested by all the family.

A letter of Mr. Pitt's at this date alludes to a circumstance too characteristic of my grandfather to be passed over. “With regard to the payment of your debts, your ideas upon the subject of your wife's fortune are completely ridiculous, for take the case *e converso*, and suppose that the fortune is on your side, and that from imprudences the other party is involved in considerable debts, whom, notwithstanding her want of fortune and

perplexed state of affairs, you had, by marrying her, proved yourself to prefer to all womankind. It is not only an equitable request, but the other party ought to insist upon it if your romantic head leads you to refuse it." "Credit your house accounts,—let system manage your expenses;" is always the burden of Mr. Pitt's advice; henceforth there were to be two to spend, and no one to keep the accounts.



CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

1780 to 1781.

BERLIN.

MY grandfather returned' to Berlin in the spring of 1780—returned, as he says, to find “nature buried in sand, and mankind in slavery;” and with so many regrets for the “clear streams, green fields, and stirring interests of English life,” that, had the “attraction to Berlin been less powerful than it was,” he might have found it a hard task to tear himself away again from home—“Would that men could be turned out to grass like horses, and that I had been wicked enough to have been sent a-grazing with Nebuchadnezzar!” On his way back to his post he stayed a few days in Paris to consult doctors, and writes of the impression he received there, to a friend at home, in the following words :—“I never made a more interesting visit to the capital of our enemies. They are perfectly disgusted with the war and their ministers. The name of an Englishman has again risen to its sterling value ; and were it not for the trust they put in our divisions at home, I do not be-

Burke.

lieve they would continue the war six weeks.* You have no idea of the avidity with which ils s'arrachent le 'Courier de l'Europe,' and the admiration they have for le grand M. Bourique, and his system of economy. I breakfasted every morning with the flower of the young men of Paris, at the Marquis de Voyer's, where politics were the constant theme, and everything they knew was débité avec toute la franchise et toute l'étourderie qui leur sont propres. Noailles is a d—d coxcomb, says everything civil in the presence of an Englishman, and is, I understand, one of the most barefaced liars of the many France is blessed with. . . . As for myself, I fear nothing in France but the dark eyes of the Countess Jules."†

How soon the public acknowledgment of his marriage followed upon his return to Berlin, and what was the sensation it created, are circumstances of which we are left in ignorance; but in his letters, written in June 1780, he talks openly of his wife and of his plans of life; and towards the autumn his house seems to have become the point de réunion for a very agreeable society. 1780 and 1781 are marked as *white years* in my grandfather's history; they were spent entirely at Berlin, except during very short excursions in the neighbourhood; and we gather from almost every letter, that he was happier than

* Before the year closed, M. Neckar, "as the leading minister in Paris, addressed a secret letter to Lord North expressing a strong desire to treat."—*Mahon's Hist. Eng.*, vol. vii., p. 80.

† Countess Jules de Polignac, the favourite friend of Marie Antoinette.

he had ever been before. "Berlin is dull and insipid," he wrote, "but that is nothing to me. I have at home all that I require." His unusual regularity as a correspondent is remarked on by his family and friends; and they in their turn are desired to write frequently of pleasant things to amuse "Charlotte." "My wife is so fond of your letters," he wrote to Sir Gilbert, "that I can think of no better way of teaching her English than by begging you to write to her often, and to make her answer in English." Her picture was painted for Sir Gilbert, and great were the discussions as to the backgrounds and hues of drapery which should do most justice to her blue eyes and brilliant skin. "If you take half as much charge of your wife's appearance as you did of mine," said Mrs. Eden, "I pity her from my heart." Whether the family ever received this picture or not remains untold; but an unknown miniature found in a desk of my grandfather's, and given to me last year, agrees so entirely with the description in his letters, of the looks and dress of his wife, when sitting for her portrait at this time, that we can have no doubt any longer as to whom belonged those long fair curls and sky-blue draperies. The picture, in a curiously worked gold frame, is well preserved, but the back has been removed. It probably once contained hair, or a name or date.

In looking over such a correspondence as this, the map of a whole life is unrolled before one. The starting-point and the goal, the sunshine and the rain-cloud, are seen together. The same glance

shews us the cause and consequence of action, the visions of hope, and the experiences of reality, the growth and decay of friendships, the rapid succession of gladness and grief; and thus, looking "before and after," and pondering over what might have been, what has been, and what may be again, the thought rises in one's mind, that, if there be in other spheres spectators of these shifting scenes of life, they see few sadder sights on earth than the dawn of human joy.

To Sir T.
Wroughton.

Mr. Elliot's home, with its beautiful young wife, and its pleasant society, seems somewhat to have effaced the visions of cots beneath a Lowland hill, among purling streams and green bowers,—for in the course of 1780 my grandfather wrote in very dissuasive tones to a brother diplomatist, who, like himself in former days, entertained notions of throwing up his foreign appointment to rusticate at home:—"Permit me to advise you to go to England before you resolve to ask for your *retraite*. Except you are master of £2000 per annum, believe me, England is no place to be idle in. The very wear and tear of society is necessary, and you will be miserable in any society but the best. There is no medium. All those I saw who had left the foreign line regretted it. I repeat it,—England is not the country for an idle man; an idle duke with £20,000 a year s'y ennuie à périr; judge how much more an idle gentleman with a mere sustenance must languish."

1780.

Berlin was at this time a very dull residence for any one seeking the pleasures of society. The

growing infirmities of the King had increased the natural irritability of his temper to a degree which made him an object of dread to all who came within reach of his sudden outbreaks.

Of the foreign ministers, as many as could kept at a distance from the Court; and when to general ill-humour was added a particular dissatisfaction with England,* Mr. Elliot found himself singled out for special marks of the King's ill-will.

On the 23d May he wrote to Lord Stormont. Hugh Elliot to Lord Stormont, 1780.
“The King has been on horseback these three last mornings before five o'clock, in the coldest weather ever known in this season; I never saw him more active or in better spirits. Yesterday at the levée he addressed himself principally to the French minister; and after asking the news of the day, told Admiral Byng's story last war with more humour than I imagined that tragical event could have admitted of. The King, in his private conversation, often treats the fatalities our naval officers ascribe to winds and weather as mere excuses for their own misfortunes or misconduct. ‘Si j'avais une flotte, je chasserais les vents de la mer,’ is an expression His Majesty made use of several times this winter when he read the complaints of both sides against an enemy, he believes, often called in to the assistance of an unable or unwilling admiral. Yesterday he repeated that he did not conceive how it sometimes happened

* The late successes of the Court of Vienna at St. Petersburg were supposed, at Berlin, to be in part due to the “machinations” of Sir James Harris, English minister there.

that both French and English 'trouvaient le vent contraire' in their naval engagements."*

"No one can tell," wrote my grandfather, "the misery of appearing in public here in moments of disgrace and defeat. . . . Sudden starts of passion hurry him" (the King) "beyond the bounds of reason. In one of these Maltzahn was recalled, and since the Chancellor's disgrace none of His Majesty's ministers count upon the stability of their places."

Moore's
Journals.

The recall of M. Maltzahn from London, and the appointment to that post of an "ill-conditioned fellow, merely to spite the English cabinet," gave occasion to one of Mr. Elliot's happiest repartees. "What do they say of —— in London?" asked Frederick, tauntingly. "Digne représentant de Votre Majesté;" replied Mr. Elliot, bowing to the ground.

1781.

That the King's ministers were justified in their opinion of the precariousness of the tenure by which they retained office, was proved in the course of the following year by the sudden dismissal of Baron de Borche—an event which caused a great sensation at the time, and is thus related by my grandfather:—

Hugh Elliot
to Sir
Gilbert.

"During my absence"—he and his wife had been on a visit to the charming Prince and

* Captain Elliot, writing to his nephew Hugh about this time, says, "I always admired your king as a general, and from what you tell me of his sayings I cannot help thinking he would also make a most excellent admiral. I wish to God he would come here and command our fleet; I would serve under him with more pleasure than any British seaman. I think we should be better, too, if he had the command of both our houses of Parliament, for our d—d boasted constitution will sink us to the bottom of ——."

Princess of Anhalt Dessau, who are quoted by him and others as models of every virtue—"during my absence a singular event took place. I called on Baron Borche the night of my return to ask what news. 'None of consequence to the public,' replied he, 'though there is a bit of news not a little interesting to myself—I this morning received my dismissal.' Judge of my surprise! He was at that moment supposed to be in great favour, and was destined by the voice of the public to be named Minister of State. His ingenious wife had scraped together a motley troop of comedians who acted in his coach-house. Upon this theatre Baron Borche's fortune split. The king wrote to him : 'Si vous voulez être comédien vous ne pouvez rester à mon service ; il faut opter entre le théâtre et votre poste.' *Réponse*—'Sire, Les incommodités de ma femme l'ayant obligée de se renfermer chez elle, elle avait assemblé quelques acteurs qui donnèrent des représentations sur un théâtre dans ma maison à des sociétés particulières.'—On ajouta qu'on les avait renvoyés, et qu'on se flattait que Sa Majesté excuserait une inadvertence dont on n'aurait pas été capable, si on avait eu lieu de croire qu'elle aurait été désagréable à Sa Majesté. *Seconde lettre*—'Je vous prie de prendre votre congé au plus vite.'—To another correspondent Mr. Elliot says :—On assure que le Président de Police avait donné avis que les ministres étrangers payaient ; cette Hydre qui renaît à tout instant à Berlin malgré tous les efforts pour l'exterminer. Cependant je crois qu'il est avéré qu'ils n'ont jamais payé que de leurs personnes."

Priests and academicians were made to feel the force of the royal will. On the 30th May 1780, the first were ordered to perform a mass, and the second to assist at it, for the repose of the soul of M. de Voltaire!—a solemn satire, at which the spectators, struck with a sense of its absurdity, “observed neither decorum nor decency.”

The army came in for its share of the royal displeasure. In June 1781, Mr. Elliot wrote—“The heat of this warm season causes severe suffering among the troops. The King has been less satisfied this year than usual with the garrison of Berlin, and has ordered them to be more severely exercised. An old officer lately threw himself in the King’s way and asked for support. Infirmities and age had driven him out of the service. He could no longer bear the fatigue which had broken his constitution. The King answered that he must have recourse to his talents, and if these did not suffice, to the humanity of others. ‘Vous voudriez que je demandasse l’aumône? Hé bien! je commence par m’adresser à Votre Majeste;’ and, at the same time, stretched out his hat in a suppliant posture. The king answered, ‘J’aurai soin de vous, mais ne le dites à personne.’ Indeed, the number of those reduced to the like circumstances is incredible.”

The heats of summer passed, but the king’s temper did not cool; and Mr. Liston, in the course of the autumn, wrote somewhat disrespectfully of His Majesty, as follows:—“The old fellow was in perfect good humour the first day, and as cross as the devil the two last days of manœuvres. He

Mr. Liston, at
Berlin, 25th
Sept. 1781, to
Mr. Elliot at
Dessau.

was particularly severe on the gens d'armes—told them they had done nothing but *Schweinereyen*, that they were a parcel of *Windbeutel*s, *Berlinische Hofleute*, and so forth. They say his ill-humour was much owing to a letter he received by the Friday's post from Russia, in which the Empress begs, or rather insists, he will give regiments to the two princes of Wurtemberg. He does not wish to comply, and does not know how to refuse."

The absence of the usual splendours of a Court, and the extreme difficulty of even obtaining a sight of the King,* deprived Berlin during the last years of Frederick the Great of the attractions which had drawn so many young Englishmen to Germany in Mr. Elliot's early days.

Of the group of gay young men who had met together at Munich in the summer of 1775, three were already sleeping "the sleep that knows no morrow;" and the two survivors, Mr. Elliot and Mr. Pitt, were *settled down* to the serious business of life—the latter as a painstaking M.P., the former as a rangé père de famille; the services of Lacoste, that merriest of Scapins and best of hair-dressers, were no longer required; and a good English nurse was found to be the most important person in the household. In April 1781 Mr. Elliot's first child was born—a daughter—to whom the Princess of Prussia and Lady Harris

Mr. Harvey,
Mr. Stanley,
and Lord
Lindsay,
afterwards
Duke of
Ancaster.

* No presentation could be made to the King except through the interest of some member of his small court at Potsdam. A foreign minister residing in Berlin could only give a letter of introduction to one of these.

became godmothers. The Prince and the Princess of Prussia shewed constant kindness to my grandfather; and there are several letters from her in this correspondence, all very kind and gracious, but, with one exception, scarcely interesting enough for insertion.

Lady Harris' lively answer to a letter from her old friend Hugh, which he had apparently written in somewhat solemn strain, to ask her sponsorship for his little daughter, is worth transcribing :—

St. Petersburg, March 5th-16th, 1781.

My dear *Brother*—I received your epistle yesterday to my very great and agreeable surprise. This is, then, No. 1 of our correspondence; God knows whether we shall ever get out of the teens, or indeed into them. I look upon your letter to be very much in the style of the Prodigal Son the two or three first days he spent at home. 'Tis written as if you had just returned from confession, and with all the humility of a sinner who has just been rebuked. You have, however, too bad an opinion of yourself, for you have too good a heart (and, indeed, a head not amiss when it takes a right turn), not to be a good husband and a good father, as you have always been a good son, brother, and friend, though now and then a teasing and a *chagrining* one. I readily accept the offer of your daughter; she cannot fail of being handsome, and, above all things, I flatter myself, *will have your nose*, my dear old friend. I sometimes think over past times, and reflect that if anybody had told us when we sat upon

my couch, you at my sick feet by my fireside in George Street, that in four years I should be writing to you from Petersburg, to you a *married* man at Berlin, that we should have looked upon them as worthy of a strait waistcoat. All I can say is, that I can never be more attached to you, and wish you more sincerely well than I did then, and that this attachment will ever continue the same, and as truly as if you were my own brother. Your wife will always, as such, be entitled to my regard. I do not doubt that she does not want that motive for me to bestow it upon her. You are really very modest about the Princess of Brunswick, for 'twas your cruelty drove her to admire P——; I fear his constancy is not so great as hers, indeed the object is not so worthy on his side. I write this, spending a solitary evening at home, a thing which appears very extraordinary to me who am little used to it. I have been ill a few days of *fièvre de fluxion*, *et le volage* Harris is gone gadding for an hour or two. In general one sees a great deal of the world and its vanities in this place, and I believe 'tis a better method of disgusting from them, than all the common precepts. You ask me if England is my passion; I answer, more so than ever, and my ambition, a small circle of friends, and a great part of that small number *Elliot*s—I admit willingly the *domesticated* ones * . * Your brother is, as you well know, the most perfect of human creatures; he is one of the high finished works of the Creator. Maria is a good girl, but most excessive thoughtless and wants keeping in order.

As to His Excellency, you may recollect we have talked him over now and then; he is the same wolf, and I the same lamb as ever, but our friendship is notwithstanding as well cemented as that of those animals was in the golden age. Odd as we all are, we shall be very happy to spend a great deal of our time together.

"The Cobentzels* are naturally well received here. They continue the same aversion for soap and water, and especially the gentleman, who since his mourning† has been more ugly and dirty than ever. They give a number of great dinners and suppers, and think to stop people's mouths—as house robbers do mastiffs', by filling them. She is extremely clever in her way; but it is not a merciful one, and, like justice, spares neither friend nor foe. We live daily a great deal together, as, indeed, all the body are much united. The Frenchman is not for Sir James, but by a mutual convention (you see I make use of technical terms), his children come here, and I, Sir James' *child*, go to his house. The Ambassadors are forbidden fruit; though, if that our mother Eve eat of was as little tempting, her *faux pas* was inexcusable indeed. Numbers of the Russians inquire after you with the greatest regard—Count Michel Romantzow, Count Simon Woronzow, M. de Barbarodka, and a hundred others.

"My children are well; the boy begins to talk, and will be able to say soft things before your

* M. de Cobentzel had been the Austrian minister at Berlin, and had lately gone from thence to St. Petersburg.

† Probably for the Empress Queen.

daughter can understand them ; my girl is charming for nine months. God bless you ! Je vous charge de bien des choses de ma part à Madame Elliot ; pour ce qui est de M. Harris, je lui laisse le soin de parler de lui-même. Si vous *politiquez* autant que lui, elle trouvera n'avoir épousé qu'une vieille gazette—Ever yours most affectionately,

“ H. M. HARRIS.”

In the course of the summer of 1781, Sir Gilbert paid his brother a visit of a week, on his way through Berlin to Petersburg, whither he was hastening to escort his sister-in-law, Lady Harris, back to England, her presence being required there on matters of family business. This visit was a great pleasure to both brothers, and many allusions occur in the subsequent correspondence to the pleasing impression made on Sir Gilbert by the beauty and agreeability of Hugh's wife, and the happiness of his home. Of Sir Gilbert Hugh wrote, “ He appeared to me quite a giddy young man, at least ten years younger than myself, so prudent and steady have I become.” Perhaps his account of himself in a letter to Lady Harris, in which he answered some playful remarks on his former ways, was quite as near the truth,—“ After all,” he said, “ I find nothing is so like an *unmarried* man, as a married man.”

The paucity of English travellers in Berlin, during the summer of 1781, is commented on by Mr. Elliot with some satisfaction, more than one legacy in the shape of bad debts and dishonoured bills having been left him in the previous year.

by his travelling countrymen; but two travellers passed through Berlin in the summer, who made no small sensation—the Bishop of Osnabruck (Duke of York), “full of health and spirits, prodigious handsome, and very civil;” and Baron Dimsdale, physician to the Empress of Russia, who came to Berlin, by her desire, for the special purpose of inoculating the children of the Prince of Prussia.

Hugh Elliot
to Baroness
Wrech.

Mr. Elliot tells the Baron's curious story in a letter to the Baroness de Wrech. “Un homme singulier a quitté cette capitale avant hier—né Quaker, il rêva une belle nuit qu'il deviendrait *Baron*; qu'il recevrait en gros et en détail vingt-trois milles livres sterling, et cinq cent livres sterling par an; qu'il dînerait avec des Empereurs et des Impératrices; qu'il serait membre du Parlement d'Angleterre; qu'il porterait bourse et épée, et qu'il ne dirait plus ni *Tu* ni *Toi*. Les Quakers, ses confrères, lui dirent—Mon ami, tu n'es ni beau ni blanc, ni jeune ni grand; tu radotes, ne conte plus tes rêves. Le rêveur a cependant eu raison. Le Baron Dimsdale vient d'arriver pour la seconde fois de la Russie, chargé de toutes les richesses dont la magnificence de l'Impératrice l'avait fourni. De plus il portait une lettre pour le Prince de Prusse, le recommandant comme l'homme le plus digne d'inoculer les héritiers de cette monarchie.”

Luckily for the Prussian dollars, the children had been inoculated, and the Baron's services were not required.

While Berlin offered so little to amuse my grandfather and his lively gossip-loving coterie,

letters from abroad were particularly welcome; and, before coming to the more interesting ones from England, it may be worth while to glance at the correspondence he kept up at this period, with unusual regularity, with some of his brother diplomatists at foreign courts.

From Sir James Harris he heard constantly. I have already transcribed some passages from the letters they interchanged while Mr. Elliot's matrimonial affairs were pending, and the more serious and official portions of the correspondence are of little interest now; but the general opinions entertained by so clever a man as Sir J. Harris of the Russian court and country are curious and entertaining, more especially as he was personally *au mieux* in that Court, treated with distinction by the Empress, and high in the confidence of Potemkin.

After writing on private concerns, he goes on in one of his letters as follows:—

“Now for a word on this country—you know its extent, its high reputation—nothing but great deeds are done in it.”

Sir J. Harris
to Hugh
Elliot.

“The monarch is an arrant woman, a vain spoilt woman, with more masculine than manly virtues, and more female vices than weaknesses. The men in high life, monkeys grafted on bears; and those in lower, bears not inoculated. Religion, virtue, and morality, nowhere to be found; honour cannot be expressed in this language; there is no reward for good actions, though immense liberality ill bestowed; no punishment for any crimes; the face of the country in this neighbourhood is a desert,

the climate never made to be lived in. The Russians are, in my opinion, very great, because they are inaccessible; and from the mere local advantages of being able to furnish other nations with more articles than they need receive from them. You will naturally suppose living here not very comfortable; but I am sure of good society at home—knaves and fools are as good company in a crowd as saints and philosophers.”

In other letters he talks of the magnificent dimensions of the apartments, and the reckless expenditure of the Court and nobility; the profuse splendour of their grand entertainments—contrasting painfully with the utter want of finish and of comfort in their everyday habits and arrangements, and the squalid poverty meeting one at every turn. “Force pierreries, peu de linge” might have been the motto of the Russian empire at this period.

In the course of September 1780, the Prince of Prussia was sent by his uncle to Petersburg, to efface, if possible, by his soldier-like presence and manners, the impression which had been made on Catherine by the graceful appearance and somewhat romantic air of the Emperor of Austria, who, as Count Falkenstein, had visited the Imperial Court some time before. These hopes were, however, frustrated, and Sir J. Harris wrote to Mr. Elliot on the 12th September 1780, the following amusing account of the Prince's want of success:—“He appears to her heavy, reserved, and awkward, and her reception struck him as but formal and unpromising—the Empress, usually very talkative, took no further notice of him last evening than

Sir J. Harris
to Hugh
Elliot.

decency and common attention required. He has too much good sense to believe those who would make him believe he has no cause for dissatisfaction; he has no confidence in his suite, and justly considers them as spies set out about him by his uncle.

"On Sunday she broke off abruptly her card-party, and, as I was sitting next her, gave me to understand it was because she was worn out by the silliness of the Prince of Prussia, who sat on the other side of her.

"The Prince de Ligne, on the other hand, is received with uncommon distinction. Austrian
Minister.

"The Prince continues to be a dead weight on the Empress, and she has at last ordered her private secretary to tell M. de Panin very plainly that he must contrive to get him away soon, as she felt that if he stayed much longer she might say something rude to him. However strange this may appear, I can assure you it is fact, though I believe no one but myself is acquainted with it. In public she treats him with a coolness and reserve quite foreign to her character."

Another Imperial Court furnished more cheerful subjects for description; and the letters of M. Clément, envoyé de l'électeur de Saxe auprès de la Cour de Vienne, written in the course of the autumn of 1781, seem to have been welcomed with especial favour by the family party (which included Mr. Liston) at Berlin.

For Vienna and its society my grandfather Hugh Elliot always retained a sort of *first-love* sentiment. "Je to
M. Clément. vous avoue," he said, "que je n'ai jamais trouvé

M. Clément
to H. Elliot.

de séjour depuis où je me suis autant plu qu'à Vienne, peut-être aussi vu par le médium de la santé, de la gaieté, et de la jeunesse. Parlez-moi des plaisirs, des promenades, des femmes, pour plaire à la mienne." To this letter M. Clément replies—"Les grandes villes se ressemblent si fort par le genre et le ton de la société qu'il n'y a rien de piquant ou d'extraordinaire dans celle où je me trouve. Les hommes d'ici, généralement parlant, sont encore fort en arrière pour les lumières et les agrémens de l'esprit. Leurs conversations sont par conséquence fort sèches—elles roulent sur le jeu, sur les plus misérables nouvelles du jour, sur les chevaux, et, parmi ceux qui veulent faire les entendus, sur les arts. Les hommes les plus dignes d'être connus se trouvent dans le militaire, et sont pour le plupart des étrangers. L'état civil n'en offre que très peu. Les femmes valent infiniment mieux. Sans avoir beaucoup de fonds elles ont pour le plupart ce vernis qui les rend agréables, intéressantes même pour la société. Les dames qui donnent le ton dans la bonne compagnie de la première classe sont très aimables. Il faut vous nommer Mesdames de Thun, Pergen, la Princesse Françoise Lichtenstein, la Princesse Charle Lichtenstein, la Comtesse Ernest Kaunitz, etc., etc., qui toutes possèdent des qualités essentielles et brillantes. Parmi les jeunes dames il n'y en a guères qui seraient des prodiges par la beauté. Je ne saurais vous en citer aucune qui ait partagé de Vénus la forme et la ceinture comme la beauté qui fait le bonheur de vos jours.

"D'ailleurs il règne dans toutes les sociétés

beaucoup d'aisance. Point de roideur, ni de hauteur ni d'étiquette, moins même que dans la capitale de Brandebourg, si vantée par sa philosophie et son triomphe sur les préjugés. L'on ne peut en accuser que quelques-unes des Princesses de l'empire qui se trouvent ici, et que l'on nomme d'après une grande autorité par dérision '*les Nous.*' Les assemblées ont lieu tous les jours dans les maisons de la grande noblesse, où tous ceux qui y sont présentés ont la permission de se rendre, dommage que lorsque trois personnes sont assemblées dans un endroit, l'on ne peut se dispenser d'avoir les cartes à témoin. Il est vrai que la conversation ne se soutiendrait guère, il y a si peu de personnes qui y fourniraient quelque chose. Il n'est jamais question de souper, mais tous les jours un certain nombre de personnes est invité à dîner. Au reste, cette société est la seule qui peut passer pour véritablement intéressante; elle n'est proprement composée que du corps diplomatique et d'un certain nombre des personnes de la ville et de la cour, les deux tiers du reste de la société n'y paraissant jamais. L'on fait en général une très grande dépense ici—l'intérieur des maisons, le nombre des chevaux et des domestiques, surtout les officiers d'hôtel, demandent de fortes sommes."

After describing the beauties of the Prater, the Augarten, and other places of resort at Vienna, M. Clement goes on, "pourtant, le nombre des promeneurs et promeneuses n'est pas considérable ici—les femmes étant occupées le matin de leurs toilettes et de la dévotion, et obligées d'être habillées les après diners pour aller se montrer le

soir aux spectacles ou aux assemblées, leurs bijoux sont superbes."

Nov. 30,
1781.

Grand Duke
Paul of
Russia and
his wife,
Princess of
Wurtem-
berg.

In another letter M. Clément describes the arrival of the Count and Countess de Nord:—

"Nous possédons depuis huit jours M. le Comte et Madame la Comtesse du Nord. L'Empereur n'épargne rien, ni en dépenses, ni en attentions délicates sur tout ce qui puisse les amuser et les intéresser. Son projet est de ne pas les accabler par une foule turbulente de parties de plaisir, et de leur laisser *some part of their time to be spent in a comfortable way*. Le Grand Duc et la Grande Duchesse sortent souvent seuls pour voir les choses les plus remarquables dans cette capitale. Toute étiquette et gêne est bannie de leur manière de vivre ici. Il n'y a point de cour chez eux, il ne s'est pas même fait des présentations en règle des personnes d'ici et des étrangers. Le lendemain de leur arrivée tout le monde a passé à la porte du Comte et de la Comtesse du Nord, pour y porter des cartes. Suivant l'intention de l'Empereur, ces visites ont été rendues de même, M. le Comte du Nord ayant passé à quelques portes lui-même, et ayant envoyé à d'autres ses cartes. Le jour du bal paré l'Empereur a présenté à ces Altesses Impériales les Ambassadeurs, Ministres, Généraux, etc. Les Altesses Russes et Wurtembergeoises dinent et soupent régulièrement ensemble—l'Empereur et l'Archiduc Maximilien sont quelquefois de la partie. Enfin tout va comme il plait au Seigneur—sans faire beaucoup de projets et d'arrangement, et tout le monde est content excepté quelques sots huppés, qui font les importants, et

ne se trouvent pas assez distingués dans cette occasion. Les Ministres étrangers du second ordre ne sont pas des mieux traités—il n'est nulle part question d'eux, il n'y a que les Ambassadeurs auxquels on fait un peu finesse. Ils ont soupé au dernier bal de Schoenbrunn, à la table de l'Empereur, où se trouvaient les principautés de Russie, de Wurtemberg, et celles de l'empire—c'est-à-dire, des premières maisons, telles que Saxe, Mecklenbourg, etc. Cette fête était belle—l'illumination, la quantité et la qualité des plats, des vins, et des rafraîchissements, tout était dans le meilleur ordre possible. Il y avait plusieurs quadrilles composés de différentes sociétés de la ville, habillées en maletots, en guerriers, en Hongrois, en Cosaques. Les guerriers l'emportaient sur les autres par la beauté et les agrémens des femmes qui se trouvaient dans cette société; Myladi Derby en était. L'intention de l'Empereur de n'admettre à ce bal que des personnes d'un dehors agréable n'a pas été tout à fait remplie. Au reste, il y manquait aussi cette tournure gaie sans laquelle ces fêtes n'amusent pas jusqu'au bout."

Of the Emperor Joseph, M. Clément writes:—"Son gouvernement est digne de la plus grande attention. L'Empereur donne les plus belles ordonnances pour l'économie de ses finances, pour l'administration intérieure, et pour la propagation des lumières parmi sa nation. Il n'y a rien de plus franc, et de plus populaire, que sa manière de vivre et ses conversations. Toute contrainte et toute étiquette est bannie de sa cour. Il n'y parait en public que les Dimanches matin en

sortant de la messe. Il n'y a plus de réceptions à la Cour où les dames assistent. Il vient de choisir, parmi les 1325 chambellans de sa cour, 36 qui resteront attachés à sa personne, et jouiront de quelques prérogatives que les autres n'auront pas —c'est une distinction qu'il a voulu marquer à ceux qu'il a nommés."

In these letters of M. Clément there are many passages which shew the estimation in which Mr. Elliot's society was held by those who had opportunities of living in it, "où retrouverai-je le charme de nos entretiens?—La société délicieuse de la chère famille anglaise à Berlin ne se retrouve nulle part;" and such expressions are not peculiar to M. Clément, for among masses of letters from English travellers, Russian princes, German and French diplomatists, soldiers and savans, there are few in which no allusions are made to my grandfather's remarkable superiority of mind, to his powers of conversation, and his charm of manner; while Mrs. Elliot's beauty, and Mr. Liston's good sense are not forgotten. Kindness and gaiety, and wit and ease, combined to make society delightful under the roof of the English legation at Berlin.



CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

1780 to 1782.

LONDON AND BERLIN.

THE two years which had been spent by my grandfather in the tranquillity of a happy home had not been uneventful ones to his family in England. The first letter written to Hugh by Sir Gilbert, a few days after the former had set out for Berlin, told him of Rodney's victory off Cape St. Vincent, and of the distinction gained by Captain Elliot in the action; and the same letter describes the effect produced on the writer by Mr. Burke's great speech on the alteration of the Crown Revenues—"a speech worthy of a true patriot." The naval action has been recorded in all subsequent histories of the time, and it is hardly needful to repeat here the rumours, the fears, and the hopes, which agitated the public mind in rapid succession before the event had been fully ascertained, or to dwell on the triumph with which the first five prizes were hailed as, under the charge of the *America*, they hove in sight off the Lizard. Burke's great speech on

Feb. 11, 1780.

16 Jan. 1781.

John Elliot,
son of the
Lord-Justice
Clerk.

the alteration of the Crown's revenue and influence was a triumph of another kind, no less well-known to all students of English history; but, on account of its subsequent influence on the political sentiments and connections of the two brothers, it may be less rapidly passed over here.

At the time of their father's death, Gilbert and Hugh Elliot had formed no political connection of their own; Gilbert had come into Parliament a very few months before; Hugh had already for some time been resident on the Continent. The former was following the law as a profession, the profession of the second removed him from the influence of English politics, but kept him in relation with the party in power. Hugh, high-spirited and full of zeal for the military honour of the country, naturally sided with those politicians who were determined to resist to the last any dismemberment of the empire, and who spurned a policy of conciliation arising out of the necessities of our position and our military failures. Gilbert, on the other hand, was not formed by nature to be "a thorough-going party man; like Trevanion in *The Caxtons*" he was apt to see the gold side of the shield, while his party were still swearing it to be silver. When a "patriotic Duke" spoke to him with evident glee of the disasters of our army in America, he felt disgusted with the factious spirit which looked for parliamentary triumph in the humiliation of the country. But when Charles Fox made one of his splendid orations, when Burke brought all

the power of his great intellect to the exposition of liberal principles, Sir Gilbert could not, like Hugh, look on these men as mere checks on the action of Government, or, like Mr. Eden, as *outs* trying to be *ins*.

A gradually growing despair of the home policy with regard to the colonies, an ever increasing distrust in the capacity of the men who guided the counsels of the country, a distaste for the tone and views of the supporters of Government, became more and more apparent in his letters. But, on the other hand, the party in power was the only one which, in defiance of failure, still professed to believe in the possibility of recovering the colonies, and refused "to tarnish the lustre of the empire by an ignominious surrender of its rights." While under the influence of these doubts and misgivings Sir Gilbert seems to have held somewhat aloof from the more active portion of his brother M.P.'s, and this had long been matter of regret to his friends; but the speech of Mr. Burke, on Economical Reform, in the opening of the year 1780, decided him at once to "take part in a business with which," he wrote, "I am captivated," and from that time his relations with Burke became those of the most cordial intimacy. In the summer of 1780 the Gordon riots took place, and in Mr. Eden's opinion they produced a more general desire for union, *coalition*, than he ever remembered to have seen before. The German story of the imps who would not be re-conjured into their bottle had received some practical illustrations during the scenes of riot with which London for

Last speech
of Lord
Chatham.

days had been filled; and while there were military encampments in the parks to keep the people quiet, many notable leaders of parliamentary strife were disposed to mutual forbearance, rather than to further agitation of the public mind.

Isabella
Elliot to
Hugh Elliot.

Parliament was dissolved in October, and long before that the Elliots had set off for Minto, but not this time with Isabella. She, who in brighter days had thought the annual visit to Minto "a great breach of society," now remained in London in a *pied à terre* which she took for herself in Chesterfield Street. "Though I shall now be under a roof of my own, I shall continue to find in the society of my brother and Maria my best happiness when they are within reach. My house is the sweetest small place in the world, neat and elegant, and seems made purposely for me, and I have the Edens always close at hand." But before the year closed Mr. Eden was appointed to the Irish Secretaryship, and went with his family to reside in Ireland; and in the following April, 1781, Isabella writes that "they are living, by their own account, in the greatest bustle for five days of every week, and the other two they shut themselves up in a house they have in Phoenix Park, and see not a soul but themselves, the children, the dogs, and cats, and poultry. They are very well liked in Ireland." London was not without its share of bustle too, the Opera-house filling to overflowing by the attraction of Vestris's wonderful dancing. "The Queen has given two balls, which were confined, in point of ladies, to the peerage; they were, I am told, very pleasant ones

but a vast deal of dancing ; they began at nine and did not finish till five in the morning, and every creature was obliged to dance every dance both up and down. I saw somebody the next day, whose feet were so blistered that they could hardly stand. Cumberland House is open to every body who chooses to go. The Duchess is very much liked, and will, I daresay, be a popular character."

While Isabella was thus writing to her brother of the amusements of London, Sir Gilbert was on the road to Berlin, where, as we have already seen, he visited Hugh on his way to Petersburg, to escort Lady Harris to England—"a bit of knight-errantry" which his sister was slightly disposed to laugh at ; however, this trip gave Isabella an opportunity of congratulating Hugh on the charming impression which Sir Gilbert brought home of his new sister, of Hugh's home, and of the baby "Isabella," who promised to be a brunette, and to have a nose as straight as Hugh's.

Sir Gilbert had, no doubt, much to see, to hear, and to tell at Berlin ; and before the brothers parted, they had an opportunity of comparing their more brilliant lots in life with that of poor Bob, from whom they received at this time a "tragi-comical epistle," describing his country living as "the most solitary place in the world—not a soul to converse with, the only disturbance to my meditations the barking of a dog, and the cawing of a rookery—a supper of cold mutton and roasted potatoes ;" he was in despair, and "could think of nothing but matrimony with some woman who could talk," to

find whom he was going instantly to York, where he had heard of such an one, "very fat and good-natured, to have in time a good deal of money." It is described, "on the whole; as a very moving letter."

Parliament met in November, and, as usual, was the signal for a general move to London. Sir Gilbert, Lady Elliot, and Lady Harris, settled themselves together under his roof in Park Street; Isabella returned from visiting various old friends near London, and re-established herself in her tiny house, where her many pursuits, and the society of her family and friends, made her quiet life a contented and cheerful one.

Early in December a debate which ensued on a motion of Sir G. Lowther's proved the House to be agreed on the war in America, and that though it might continue some time longer for other reasons, no further attempt would be made to recover the dominion or resist the independency of the Colonies.

Towards the middle of the month a gleam of cheerfulness was thrown over the political horizon by the intelligence that Sir Eyre Coote had won a great victory over Hyder Ali—news not the less grateful to the English minister at Berlin because the late successes of that potentate had given rise to a passage of arms between himself and the King. "For some time the relations between England and Prussia had not been cordial, and Frederick shewed his bad humour by not addressing a word to Mr. Elliot at several successive levées. Mr. Elliot was indignant and burning to be revenged.

When, at length, on the arrival of intelligence that Hyder Ali had made a successful and destructive inroad into the British territories in the Carnatic, Frederick broke his long silence asking—‘M. Elliot, qui est ce Hyder Ali qui sait si bien arranger vos affaires aux Indes?’ Elliot promptly replied—‘Sire, c’est un vieux despote qui a beaucoup pillé ses voisins, mais qui, Dieu merci, commence à radoter.’ Mr. Elliot related this anecdote to my informant with much exultation, adding—‘Sir, it was a revenge that Satan might have envied.’”*

The first news of Admiral Kempenfeldt’s action with the French fleet off Brest was hailed in London as a great naval victory; but, though he had succeeded in carrying off part of a convoy bound for the West Indies from under the guns of a French fleet far out-numbering his own, yet, when subsequent details were known, it was found that the success was a partial one, and that the action, by leaving the French fleet unharmed, could have no effect upon the war.

The following letter enclosed by Sir Gilbert, as being characteristic of a very gallant sailor, may be read with interest:—

“*Edgar, 14th December 1781.*

“My dear Sir Gilbert—I have only time to write you a line to say that I, and every body in this ship, are perfectly well after being shot at half an hour by the Triumphant (they say); except a few shots in our masts, sails, etc., the only misfortune that attends us is, the poor cow has

* I am indebted for this anecdote to the kindness of Sir John M’Neill.

lost her milk. On the 12th, at daylight, we saw a large fleet of ships which we stood for, and found one squadron of them, four sail of the line, with a great many ships under their convoy. A few miles to the seaward of them there was a fleet of the line regularly drawn up; we stood in between the two fleets and took twenty or thirty of the transports, victuallers, etc.; but, from the badness of the weather, the shortness of the day, and, above all, the nearness of the enemy's line, we could not take possession of them all, nor do we know how many we have; nine is the most we have seen at a time, though, as several of our own ships are amissing, we are in hopes we shall have several more. The time I had the action with the *Triumphant* was when the convoy pushed down to join the line. I think the commander-in-chief did wondrous well to get a part of the convoy from so superior a force, for they are what you see endorsed—we, twelve of the line, viz., six of three decks, four of 74, a 64, and a 60; out of the line—one of 81, four frigates, and a fire-ship. All the 13th we continued in sight of each other, the two lines manœuvring; and if we had not got the inclosed list from the prisoners, I believe the admiral would have engaged them. If we had, we must have had a bad hand of it, as they were nearly double of our force, for there were a great many frigates and armed ships not mentioned in the list—one we took of 24 guns.—J. ELLIOT.*

* In 1760, Captain Elliot had greatly distinguished himself by the capture of the "pigmy fleet" of M. Thurot, who, in the command of three privateers, had made descents on the coasts of Scotland and

"Park Street, 18th December 1781.

"My dear Hugh—In addition to the enclosed letter, I must add that Sir Richard Pearson, who is in town from the fleet, says that the *Edgar*, by her situation in the line, was the leading ship, and considerably ahead of the rest of the fleet, that she came, in following her course, directly on the *Triomphant* (*Chevalier de Vandreuil*), a three decker, which, on her approach, prepared to rake her, but that Captain Elliot, by a manœuvre, received the broadside on his bows in such a manner as to leave little damage, and then run immediately close under the counter of the *Triomphant*, and poured his whole broadside into her in such a direction, and so near to her, as to do her extraordinary damage. The rest of the engagement with this ship I cannot describe; Captain Elliot, you see, says nothing of what he has done himself. The *Triomphant* is understood to have suffered extremely, some of her masts said to be carried away. She was got into the midst of the French fleet, and thus protected from further action, etc., etc.—G. ELLIOT."

Several of the transports were afterwards retaken by the French, and only five are said to have arrived in England.

Ireland, burning two of His Majesty's ships. Captain Elliot, and the frigates under his command, came up with the invaders in the Channel, captured them, and took them into the Isle of Man. H. Walpole, writing to Sir Horace Mann, March 4, 1760, says—"You will see the short detail of the action in the *Gazette*, but, as the letter was written by Captain Elliot himself, you will not see there that he, with half the number of *Thurot's* crew, boarded the latter's vessel—*Thurot* was killed." One of the guns taken from his vessel is now preserved at Minto.

1782.

Thiébault,
séjour de 20
ans à Berlin.

The year 1782 began in gloom in the political world, and my grandfather's own private bark was rapidly drifting into troubled seas. Thiébault, perhaps, is our best guide here, though he only gives the gossip of Berlin when he talks of the clouds which, at an early period of Mr. Elliot's married life, began to obscure the light of home—
 “Heureux par sa femme,” he says, “il ne fut d'abord occupé que de soin de la rendre également heureuse, et il eut recours pour cela à tous les moyens que sa fortune et ses réflexions lui fournirent; il lui procurait les agrémens de la société les plus convenables, il choisissait et variait les compagnies qu'il rassemblait autour d'elle; mais en même temps il cherchait à lui faire acquérir quelques talens, et à lui former l'esprit et le cœur. Par malheur, cette jeune dame si belle était bornée, capricieuse, et entêtée, autant que vaine et coquette. Les leçons l'ennuyèrent, et elle finit par ne plus recevoir qu'avec humeur et dureté les représentations les plus amicales.” My grandfather's own letters shew that he, who had been used to the companionship of women with both heads and hearts, had early formed the project “de lui former l'esprit et le cœur.” But unluckily Mrs. Glass's famous receipt is as invaluable when dealing with hearts and heads as with hares; and my grandfather sat down to prepare a dish, of which he had still to catch the main ingredients. The child seems to have been a source of pleasure and amusement to both; and its sayings and doings are recorded very fully for the benefit of relations at home, though they can by no means rival in

quality or quantity the nursery tales sent out to Berlin by Mrs. Eden, whose rapidly increasing family of daughters occupied most of her time and thoughts.

In March 1782 the ménage of Berlin was momentarily increased by the birth of a second child, a boy, who died almost immediately, to the great grief of Mr. Elliot; and, while still suffering from this disappointment, and from anxiety about his wife's state of health and spirits, political events in England were preparing for him the most severe check which he had yet met with. Early in March he received the following letter from his brother:—

“ Park Street, 5th March 1782.

“ You will have observed the gradual progress of the propositions for peace, at least with America, since the capture of Lord Cornwallis. Such an event would have been a very poor reason, if it stood alone, for determining a nation to give up its purpose, especially a purpose so just and so essential as the recovery of America. But so many years' war with so little success had already produced their effect on opinions here, and this last signal event became the occasion, although not the cause, on which those opinions began to shew themselves pretty generally. Accordingly in the debates, nothing more was heard from any quarter of the hope or even possibility of succeeding in the American object; while several persons considerable in the administration began to speak plainly their disinclination to that war, and their despair of its issue,—such were Rigby, and the

Letter to Sir
J. Harris,
enclosed to
Hugh Elliot
at Berlin.

Lord Advocate for Scotland. Lord G. Germaine prepared his retreat, as I think I mentioned to you at the time, and the symptoms of a general revolution in measures became so manifest, that, without inspiration, you will find, by turning to my former letters, I have been a true prophet. I then told you my own opinion, and on that opinion I have since acted by voting for General Conway's first address, which was rejected by a majority of one in a very full House, and by voting and speaking for the second which was carried by 19. There are, I think, some objections to that address; but there were reasons, too, which may be left to your own conjectures, which did, in my opinion, render an explicit declaration of Parliament and of the nation extremely necessary, and which, I think, outweighed the general objections to such a measure and the particular defects of this one. The spirited declarations of a people at the commencement or during the progress of a war produce good effects on the prosecution of the war itself, but it must be confessed that complaints of burthens, and impatience for peace, produce the contrary effects on a negotiation for peace. This observation is made stronger by the wording of General Conway's resolution and address, and ten times more so by the resolution voted last night (4th March); and this is the more to be regretted, as I think Parliament might have avoided this evil without losing the proposed effect of their measures; but I daresay you remember England well enough to know how difficult it is to frame any measure free from objection, when twenty

persons are to be the authors of hardly so many words.

"Pray tell me whether this concession to America may not make a change in the politics of Europe. In some quarters of Europe we have had fair words, but I confess I brought home the idea that *all* Europe favoured the independency of America, and looked to the chance of some advantage in such a revolution. . . . You ask me what will be the effect of all this at home. I really do not know, and I assure you, upon my honour, I have not thrown away a thought on the subject.

"The grand principle of distinction and separation between parties (the American dispute) is now removed. There is at least an opportunity therefore for coalition without the sacrifice of former principle on either side. That the opportunity may not be lost by the damned intricacies of arrangements, private interests, and personal considerations, should be the prayer, morning and evening, of every true lover of his country. *All* the ability of the country united to direct *all* the resources of the country to one good end, is a prospect which I hope is not quite out of sight, but which, I fear, both requires too much virtue, and promises too much happiness, for this latter age to look for with certainty."

A month later Sir Gilbert wrote:—"The change in Government happened immediately after, and indeed, as an immediate consequence of, the American votes. A very slight consideration will account for it. The true and funda-

Sir Gilbert to
Hugh Elliot.
22d April,
1782.

mental cause of the removal of the late ministry was their long and uniform want of success, and the state of despair to which the daily calamities of the country had reduced the most sanguine. This cause, although it became stronger by every day's continuance of it, yet, it will be said, might have been expected to produce its effect much sooner; and this is true. One circumstance only prolonged the power of the Administration, which, without it, must have fallen in a much earlier period of our disgraces. It was the wish of Great Britain to recover America. Government aimed at least at this object, which Opposition rejected. Those, therefore, who thought the war with America just and practicable, however much they might be dissatisfied with the abilities of the ministers, or disgusted with their mismanagement or misfortunes, had yet no choice left them, for they were the only men who would attempt the recovery of the colonies. This I take to have been the true bond between Parliament and the late ministry, and the true key to its otherwise unaccountable longevity. For if it had had more lives than a cat, they must all have dropped some campaigns ago, if the cause I have mentioned had not preserved them. I remember when it was said Saratoga would upset them; it was afterwards foretold that if we should be drawn into a war with France, ministry could not stand. The necessity which produced the commission to America, and all the humiliating concessions which Parliament made, in a sort of panic, would have destroyed any other government. The same may

be said of the Spanish, and after it of the Dutch war ; and there is hardly a gazette during the last five or six years which would not account for a change of government. But in fact the principles of the ministers respecting America were agreeable to the people, and those of Opposition were offensive to them.

Sir Gilbert
Elliot to
Hugh Elliot.

“ I speak this language the more confidently to you now, as you must recollect the time, and that not a very late one, when I had a strong inclination to side with those who wished for a change, and that I refrained from it only on the consideration I have just mentioned ; and whether I and the rest of the nation have been wrong and foolish on the American question, either from the beginning, or in its progress, is a point which the purblindness of human reason can probably never see through.

“ I must own, however, that events and experience do very strongly shake my past American principles to their foundation ; and although I could name many blunders in policy, both civil and military, and many miscarriages of mere fortune, which might perhaps have turned the scale against us, and may perhaps be sufficient of themselves to account for the utter loss of our object, and the addition of many heavy calamities, yet I must also admit the possibility that what has happened may have happened as the natural and necessary consequence of our measures, independently of blunder or accident. This is a question of mere curiosity now, so far as America is concerned, for necessity has already decided, if not

Sir Gilbert Elliot to Hugh Elliot. our principles, at least our future conduct with regard to her. But it is perhaps a great lesson in political wisdom, applicable to other subjects, which we ought to study deeply, and which I shall study for one, without that prejudice at least which belongs to an obstinate attachment to former opinions. The moment America was out of the question, Samson lost the lock of his strength, and the natural weakness of the ministry appeared immediately. Questions of censure were rejected by very small majorities, and questions for removal ran still nearer; and would in fact have been carried if the resignation of the ministers had not preceded their dismissal. . . .

Thurlow. "The chancellor actually remains, but I am not clear that all the accession of ability which he brings can compensate for the discord which his difference of opinion with his present colleagues on their favourite measures of reform must introduce into the cabinet, and for the appearance of weakness which a divided government on any capital object must throw upon it.

"The change has been complete; it is generally said to have been forced on the King, and I cannot undertake to admit or deny this; but I am more apt to imagine that the resolution of Parliament respecting America was the greater violence of the two; and whatever may have been the first impressions, on dismissing old friends and servants, and receiving into his closet new and hitherto adverse men, yet there seems to me to be an impression likely to yield to more knowledge of these men, and to habits of doing business con-

fidentially with them. You will hardly need to be told that I voted for the removal of the late ministry; I refused, however, to concur in the vote of censure, to which I could not, without an impression of something disgusting to myself, as well as of injustice, give my consent in the moment of their fall. I shall support the present ministry with more cordiality, and therefore I hope with more exertion than I ever could the last. The reforms with which their Government opens, you know I formerly approved. I think this is a happy moment for gaining to the constitution some great and valuable improvements; and I like them the better for the facility with which they may now be carried, without those convulsions which could have alone produced them as the measures of an Opposition, and which naturally, and I think deservedly, gave great scandal when they were attempted before to be forced on Parliament by the means of popular distraction, during a war which rendered all distractions fatal."

The advent of the Rockingham party to power gave rise to immediate speculations on the probable changes, abroad as well as at home, which would naturally ensue from a change of policy at head-quarters. Before Mr. Elliot heard officially of his recall, it was rumoured at Berlin, and in his first letter home, he says—"There are two circumstances too flattering to myself not to mention them to you. The Prince of Prussia, who came to town on Sunday last, and was at court, took me aside, and said he hoped what he heard concerning my change of situation was not true. I told him all

1782.

Hugh Elliot
to Sir Gilbert
Elliot.

that I had learned upon that subject as yet was from my friends, but that I had every reason to think it fixed. He then asked me if I knew the reason; I answered that I had been told from home that it was understood that I had not had the good fortune to be personally agreeable to the King of Prussia. His Royal Highness answered—‘This is what I have heard; and what surprises me the more is, I can assure you, that within these very few days his Majesty a *publique-ment fait votre éloge*; en tout cas je me flatte que nous vous reverrons ici.’ I was the more struck with this from his Royal Highness, as there is scarcely any example of his expressing himself so strongly to any individual in his present circumstances. On the other hand, Prince Henry has sent to me to know if it would be agreeable to me that he should write to the Duke of Richmond, with whom he is personally acquainted, to ask that I may be continued at Berlin. The Prussian ministry have been so warm in their expressions of regard, and of regret at my departure, and so positively deny any official interposition from hence, that there is reason to suspect, that if any ministerial step has been taken, it may have proceeded from Count Lusi’s own private disinclination, and I should wish this inquired into.”

Madame de Verelst, Mr. Elliot’s mother-in-law, writing from Prince Henry’s residence at Rheinsberg, says—“*Votre rappel d’ici ne peut vous être désavantageux; vous êtes aimé de tous les membres de la famille Royale, hors de Sa Majesté, qui ne vous connaît pas, et qui a le préjugé de croire que*

Madame de
Verelst to
Hugh Elliot.

vous êtes guidé par Milord Bute. Les Ministres verront par la suite où ces ménagements les conduiront. Monseigneur me charge de vous faire mille compliments, et de vous témoigner combien sincèrement il est affligé de votre rappel."

In the course of May my grandfather received the following letter from his brother, shewing that the rumours current in Berlin respecting Mr. Elliot's recall, and the grounds for it, had been better founded than such rumours often are :—

" Park Street, 4th May 1782.

" My dear Brother—I have seen Mr. Fox twice on your account since my last letter, and have refrained from writing you till I could tell you with certainty what to expect. Your recall is determined on the ground of your being disagreeable to the King of Prussia. This is the true and only reason for this measure, which I am happy to inform you is not attributed in any degree to any part of your conduct, but to its real cause, namely, the prejudices which had been by some means or other given to the King of Prussia respecting your supposed connection with Lord Bute.* I believe that Mr. Fox is really concerned, as he says he is, to find this measure necessary. * * * I have some reason to think, although he did not tell me so, and although I have it not from the office, that the King of Prussia's wish on the subject has been directly and officially signified to him. I have no

Sir Gilbert
Elliot to
Hugh Elliot.

* The King of Prussia had never forgiven Lord Bute his share in the Peace of Paris, by the terms of which he considered himself aggrieved.

doubt that, whatever the consequences may be to your future situation, you will with manliness and candour acquiesce in the propriety of your removal in these circumstances. It remains to know what is now to be done. I conversed pretty freely on this subject with Mr. Fox to-day, and I am expressly authorized by him to assure you that it is his wish and his intention, as well as that of the King, to give you another Court as soon as an opportunity or vacancy shall occur. He said the King mentioned this of his own accord, as soon as he had informed him of the propriety of your quitting Berlin. He says, however, he does not know of any immediate vacancy, but that he will look for it, and take the first occasion which offers. I am authorized by Mr. Fox to tell you what you have read."

Sir Gilbert
Elliot to
Hugh Elliot.

A little later Sir Gilbert wrote again, that in spite of the assurances made by Fox in the interview described in the preceding letter, two vacancies in the foreign line had occurred and had been filled up. Mr. Stanley, Lord Derby's brother, coming in over Hugh's head, had been appointed to Dresden. "I own I cannot bring myself to suspect Mr. Fox's sincerity; in the first place, it would be contrary to his general character, and in the next place, why should he use any art with me whom he certainly cannot fear? Yet I cannot help feeling that the present appointments in your line have the marks of yielding to importunity. To importunity I have myself an insurmountable reluctance and aversion, and if the business is to be decided on those principles, I fear I shall be an unsuccessful

agent; yet I will certainly represent, as it strikes me, the fair claim you have for a preference to strangers in your profession. * * * What will you do in the meanwhile? Your return home with your family must naturally be uppermost in your thoughts and wishes."

To these letters my grandfather replied that their effect on him might be best described in several expressions of Jaffier:—"The feigned story of his embarrassments is more than realized in my fate." He does not particularize the expressions, but one can fancy that to the order of "Home, home, I say," he may have mentally replied—

"Yes, if my heart would let me—
This proud, this swelling heart; home I would go,
But that my doors are hateful to my eyes,
Fill'd and damm'd up with gaping creditors;
I've now but fifty ducats in the world,
Yet still I am in love, and pleas'd with ruin.
Oh! Belvidera! Oh! she is my wife—
And we will bear our wayward fate together,
But ne'er know comfort more."—*Venice Preserved.*

The moment at which Mr. Elliot's recall took place was peculiarly ill-timed as regarded his private affairs, for there were questions pending concerning his wife's estates which could not be decided until she should attain her majority, of which she still wanted some months; and while they continued unsettled it was believed that her absence from Prussia, together with that of her husband, might be exceedingly detrimental to their future fortunes. My grandfather's own means, too, had been greatly embarrassed during the previous two years, owing, it appears, in some

measure to his having sustained heavy losses at play during the winter which preceded his marriage. The coterie of Prince Henry, which my grandfather frequented very constantly, chiefly because there he was certain of meeting with Countess Verelst and her daughter, was very much addicted to high play ; indeed, at that time on the Continent, as in England, gambling was the passion of the day. It was not, however, a passion of my grandfather's, who is always described by his friends as preferring conversation to the card-table ; but at a moment when harassed by mental disturbances, doubts as to his own course, and as to the feelings of others, it was not unnatural that he should have sought *des distractions* in what constituted the chief interest of the society in which he lived. Bets, too, he made ; and as they were generally staked on the success of some English admiral or general, he was not unfrequently a loser.

Sir Gilbert
Elliot to
Hugh Elliot.

May passed without any further intelligence from England on the point of a future employment for Mr. Elliot, but Sir Gilbert still wrote —“ I assure you sincerely that I have the most entire reliance on the former assurances of Mr. Fox ; but, should no mission be found for you at present, I must repeat to you and my dear *Belvidera* the most affectionate welcome, and the most earnest invitation to all we can share with you in town or country, in point of society, convenience, accommodation, or more substantial assistance, which your occasion or my abilities can point out.”

Belvidera, unfortunately, was not at all disposed to exclaim with her prototype, "If love be treasure, we'll be wondrous rich!" and the "unkindest cut of all" that my grandfather had at the moment to endure was the utter heartlessness displayed by his wife. Tears and reproaches, and a declared resolution never to leave her native country, were followed up by a line of conduct which made her the subject of general remark, and many of his friends went so far as to recommend a separation; but this was a course which my grandfather's own feelings made impossible, and her youth, her inexperience of the world, and the irritable state of nerves which had followed on, and continued since her last confinement, were pleaded by him as reasons for redoubled forbearance and tenderness; to which Sir Gilbert replied—"Even without these pleas, no man is for a larger portion of indulgence from mortal to mortal than I am; if she only loves you half as well as you do her, she is sure of a warm place in my breast; consider me and mine, town and country, at your disposal in this crisis." And then referring to the separation which had been advised, he ends by saying, "I am not for making a man happy by breaking his heart."

For this time the domestic storm blew over, and Mr. and Mrs. Elliot proceeded to pass the summer at a *château délabré* in the vicinity of Rheinsberg. While there, he received a letter from Prince Henry, which begins as follows, apparently in answer to an invitation from the ex-minister.—"De Rheins-

Prince
Henry of
Prussia to
Mr. Elliot.

berg, 13th Juillet 1782—Monsieur, Sous quelque titre, sous quelque nom, qu'on vienne vous voir, c'est toujours sans autre dessein que celui de jouir de la société de l'aimable, de l'instruit, et de l'honnête Elliot," Then follow some, at the present date, unintelligible remarks on the proceedings of the French and English fleets in the Channel, and the letter ends thus—"l'idée de votre successeur m'est aussi amère qu'elle l'est d'ordinaire aux souverains lorsqu'ils envisagent le leur. Je ne saurais vous peindre une plus forte antipathie; elle est fondée sur mon amitié et sur la haute estime avec laquelle, je suis, Monsieur, votre très affectionné ami.

HENRI."

Hugh Elliot
to
Sir Gilbert,
2d July 1782.

That my grandfather did not acquiesce in the propriety of his removal from the court of Berlin *on the grounds given for it*, appears plainly in the following letter to his brother :—"I am convinced," he wrote, "that had I been at any other court of equal importance, some cogent reason would have occurred to have made my removal at least plausible in the eyes of the world. You may remember what my sentiments were when I was last in England, and as things have turned out I must acquiesce in the propriety of my removal from a post of confidence by those who must have considered me as by no means coinciding with them in principle or action." This view of the case was, however, one which Sir Gilbert would by no means accept; and though he "could not prove that his brother's removal had not been made in order to clear the way for a friend of Mr.

Fox, still he did not believe it—and remained unshaken in his confidence in the sincerity and friendliness of Mr. Fox.”* The true grounds of my grandfather’s removal from Berlin are probably to be found in part in the reasons assigned for it by Sir Gilbert, and in part in those supposed, and “acquiesced in” by his brother.

The dislike of the king, as represented by Count Lusi (*digne représentant de Sa Majesté*), was a sufficient reason for Mr. Elliot’s removal from Berlin; and most probably the representations made to Mr. Fox derived additional weight from what must have reached him from other quarters concerning Mr. Elliot’s habitual modes of thought and of expression when dealing with political questions. The warnings and remonstrances written to him by his family to Munich

* The mission to Berlin had been offered first to Mr. Stanley, and secondly to Lord Cholmondeley, of whom Lord Holland says—“Lord Cholmondeley had much impaired his fortune by dice and dissipation, and, though an associate of Mr. Fox and his friends, thought it a better game to attach himself to Shelburne.”—See the rest of the note by *Lord Holland—Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, vol. i., p. 318.

Walpole says—“I have said that the new ministers were distressed for want of places to satisfy their friends. . . . In these difficulties Lord Rockingham behaved with more zeal and decency than Lord Shelburne. An instance of the latter’s impolitic insensibility occurred in the case of Lord Cholmondeley. . . . Lord Cholmondeley had peculiarly attached himself to him.”—*Walpole’s Last Journals*, vol. ii. Nevertheless, Lord Cholmondeley’s claims were not overlooked by Lord Shelburne’s colleagues, as he was appointed by Mr. Fox to succeed Mr. Elliot at Berlin. Mr. Liston, writing on the 21st of July, mentions the receipt of a letter from Lord Cholmondeley, in which, on the dissolution of the Rockingham Ministry, he announces that “he has resigned the honour of being His Majesty’s envoy at Berlin.”

had been frequently renewed since his appointment to Berlin ; his unguarded readiness in expressing his opinions in mixed society, without due consideration of the impressions they were likely to give ; his strong condemnation, *when among his countrymen*, of certain political characters at home ; the vehemence of his feelings in all points relating to the military reputation of his country, which at one time had nearly led to an open rupture with his old friend General Burgoyne—all these were well known traits of character, which not only justified his recall, but probably inclined Mr. Fox to consider the King of Prussia's feelings for Mr. Elliot from a point of view somewhat analogous to His Majesty's. On the other hand, if the same vehemence and the same powers of satire and of irony had been directed towards another political party than that of Mr. Fox, it is possible they might have been viewed with as little disfavour as the pointed and pungent sayings of the Fitzpatrick and Hares, and might have obtained indulgence from a minister whose own tenure of office was by no means agreeable to the King of England.

July 1782.

Sir Gilbert
Elliot to
Hugh Elliot,
5th July
1782.

The death of Lord Rockingham in the month of July dissolved the ministry of which he was the head, and the immediate consequences are too well known to need repetition. On the 5th July Sir Gilbert wrote :—"With the opinion they (Lord J. Cavendish, Fox, Burke, etc.) entertain of Lord Shelburne's character, they could do no otherwise with dignity or credit ; for myself, my choice between the two is easily made. My opinion has

been, since the American business was over, that the country looked to the abilities of Mr. Fox, and the high character and integrity of his and Lord Rockingham's friends, for their salvation. I know little personally of Lord Shelburne or of his immediate retainers, Dunning, Barré, and Alderman Townshend, but the little I do know, added to the voice of the world, is decisive with me. I fear we shall have a repetition of our old distractions in the struggle; I think it cannot, however, hold long. In the meanwhile, the present Government is gaining strength wherever it can, and has made a valuable acquisition in William Pitt, to whom, at the age of two or three and twenty, Lord Shelburne offered either the Chancellorship of the Exchequer or the Secretaryship of State, as he pleases."

On the 8th August he wrote again on his brother's affairs, and reiterated his belief that Mr. Fox would have performed his promises in Hugh's favour:—"This I am confident he would have done, merely on the apparent justice of the thing, without any motives in my favour.* I feel a strong confidence that these ministers will take the same view of your claims" (either for employment or for an allowance in the interval—a sort of half-pay which was usually given in those days), "on the ground of their justice. I shall, however, certainly not bring myself under any obligation to them, and I have openly and explicitly declared myself

Sir Gilbert
Elliot to
Hugh Elliot.
8th August
1782.

* In an earlier letter Sir Gilbert had said, "I make no pretensions to any *weight*, though I hope and believe I have the good opinion of those whom I must respect."

on this subject. Lord Shelburne sent for me a few days after he became minister, and with a profusion of flattery, and of promises of office, or anything else I could wish, desired my support. I told him frankly that I preferred his rivals. My mouth is therefore stopped, but I own that I do not conceive party can be allowed to go so far as to rob you because I am become obnoxious. Crying wrongs are not so frequently done by Governments as they are complained of, and I cannot despair of your finding justice even when favour is against you. Your case is simple—after many years of approved service in a profession which withdraws you from all others, and from any other road to fortune or advancement, or even subsistence, you are recalled without any alleged fault of yours, but for reasons entirely foreign to your own conduct."

Hugh Elliot
to Isabella
Elliot, 29th
September
1782.

Early in September Lord Grantham notified to Mr. Elliot his appointment to the Mission at Copenhagen, and on the 29th Hugh wrote to his sister Isabella, that he had accepted "an offer which, considering the circumstances of the times and my brother's political line, I think exceedingly handsome on the part of those who made it. I was very humiliatingly treated by the demigod of the blackguards. . . . My brother seemed most decidedly convinced of the rectitude and ability of a set I neither loved nor approved. He is the creature on God's earth I most love and admire; but I think he, like many others, has been led away by the false glare of a meteor, in which there is neither consistency nor a spark of heavenly

fire—a mere blaze kept up by the foul breath of faction and desperation.”

The last letter of Sir Gilbert, from which I have made extracts, terminates with the remark that he is suffering from a very severe cold, and very shortly afterwards such grave symptoms shewed themselves as to cause serious uneasiness to his friends. On the 29th October he and Lady Elliot, though her confinement was close at hand, crossed the Channel on their way to Nice, but they had proceeded no further than Lyons, when their progress was arrested for some time, and there their first child saw the light.

Gilbert,
second Earl
of Minto

While they are proceeding to the south, and my grandfather, who had with difficulty resisted the strong impulse to join his suffering brother, is preparing to take possession of his new post at Copenhagen, we may turn from them to some of the letters which the former received during this year of turmoil from the Edens, Isabella, and others.



CHAPTER THE NINTH.

1782.

ISABELLA—THE EDENS—MR. LISTON.

ISABELLA'S first letters in the spring of 1782 are full of anticipations of pleasure from a visit which it had been arranged she should pay to her brother Hugh and his wife in the course of the summer—a project that came to nothing, owing to the disagreements in the Berlin ménage, which became known to the family in England early in the current year. The letters of his family must have been less painful to my grandfather after they knew the sad state of things, than when they were written under the impression that his home was like his brother's and sister's—a scene of happiness and affection. One wonders whether all the tender passages to "our sister," and the kisses to the baby, were ever delivered.

Isabella
Elliot to
Hugh Elliot.

On the 5th March 1782 Isabella wrote—"My brother's speech on Wednesday last, on General Conway's motion, was very much approved, both as to matter and manner. You would be all agitation, I am sure, if you were in this island now.

You remember how much you used to be agitated when it was not so general as it is now ; every creature is full of conjectures. As to the ladies, they go about to balls, operas, assemblies, as usual ; and there are this month enough of them, just what you may remember—Almack's, and so forth. Eleanor writes to me very often ; her last letter was just after the birthday, which is kept sometime in February. It was very fine and very full ; and she says she grows quite thin, from being obliged to see and visit such a number of people." Isabella's last letter in 1782 excites our sympathies, by being written in "a fog—an absolute dark-Dec. 18.ness," the more to be deplored, as it even checked her ardour in setting out to see the "new actress, Mrs. Siddons, who is quite the rage ; and people go to dine at the Piazzas in Covent Garden, at three o'clock, in order to get places. All the gentlemen cry, and the ladies are in fits ; and in short, nothing of the kind has met with such universal applause since Garrick. I have only seen her once in Jane Shore, and outlived it. She is certainly very fine, and much improved since even you saw her. I have seen Morton Pitt and his wife ; she seems a very pretty, sweet girl, and he is vastly happy."

Whatever might be the political fortunes of the Edens, the sunshine of their private life was never for a moment dimmed ; thus, while in Walpole's journals we hear of an infuriated and disappointed politician, we find Mr. Eden himself, writing with all the fortitude of a Cincinnatus from his farm at Beckenham, and with an unaffected

enjoyment of simple pleasures and rural life, which I believe to have been quite unknown to any attitudinizing old Roman.

Mr. Eden
to Hugh
Elliot.

Writing from Beckenham, Kent, on the 8th of August 1782, he says:—"Our farm is beautifully situated, and well circumstanced in every respect;" he then goes on to describe the house, gardens and shrubberies, the possible profits to be derived from his farm, and continues—"we have dismissed our coach horses, and our carriages are oiled and locked up, as is also our plate chest; we have two spare beds and many visitors, indeed, some who never came to us before, and our only difficulty has been to prevent them from clashing with each other. As to your situation, I did not conceal my feelings when Gilbert told me you was to be recalled. He was not, nor is he at this hour, disposed to think anything wrong that Charles Fox could do, and his politics are so pure, that no individual interests can exist in their atmosphere. The pretence taken for putting your talents under an extinguisher does not palliate the injury. Lord Derby wanted an employment for Mr. Stanley, who was first meant to be named, but was not sufficiently skilled in languages; Lord Cholmondeley was next named, and went out with the minister that named him. Lord Hyde is now talked of; you know him. I do not enlarge on these subjects; the reflections which occur to me upon them cannot escape you. Gilbert and I are personally on very kind terms, but I never talk politics with him. The world may misjudge him, but his conduct towards the close of Lord North's

Government was, in its appearance, most unsteady, and in its effects most unkind to his natural and old friends and connections. His subsequent conduct has been inefficient; for whether he had acted right or wrong, he certainly was entitled to expect from the Rockingham Ministry immediate and solid protection, both for you and for Mr. Elliot of New York.

Mr. Eden
to Hugh
Elliot.

“Having now disposed of ourselves, it is most in the order of things to advert to the public. I do not think (and men of weight and wisdom agree with me in the opinion) that the present administration is strong enough, either in numbers or efficiency, to be permanent, and every effort is using to obtain some pacification in the course of this autumn, and Mr. Fox and his friends would be in some degree pledged to the conditions of it, however dishonourable or inexpedient, but success even in that great object would not preserve the present Government in its present form; there must be new fermentations; we shall see what they will produce. The game would be completely in the hands of Lord North and his friends, if Lord North were formed to manage such a business. The King’s situation is undoubtedly much enfranchized. It was not ill said by Mr. H. Walpole, that ‘the Crown devolved to the King of England on the death of Lord Rockingham.’ Hare says that his friend Fox is promoted from the service of the King of England to that of the King of Egypt (Pharaoh). Their remark on the Duke of Richmond’s defection was, that His Grace would not *go out* with any man.

"Upon the whole, you have thought us always unlike any other people under the sun, and every line of our history shews it.

"Eleanor and your four nieces desire to be affectionately remembered to you. W. E."

The loss of the society of Mr. Liston was one of the most serious grievances which fell upon my grandfather in the course of 1782. Mr. Liston himself could hardly have been more eager and anxious than was his friend to see him placed in a situation more suitable to his age (he was entering on his 40th year), and more capable of affording a scope for his abilities, than that of secretary to my grandfather, which he had continued to hold since Mr. Elliot first entered the foreign line. Urgent representations had been frequently made on his behalf by Mr. Elliot to the Foreign Office; and in the course of the summer of 1782 he was appointed secretary to Lord Mount-Stuart's embassy at Turin. He was so old and true a friend, and had been so entirely, from Mr. Elliot's boyhood, in his confidence, that nothing could make up for his loss at a moment when anxiety and distress were pressing heavily on his chief's mind; and, though parted, their correspondence continued to be of a highly confidential character. The letters he wrote from Vienna on his way to Venice and Turin, and from Turin itself, are amusing, as the following extracts will shew.

After remarks on the prosperous appearance of the Austrian peasantry, the cultivated and cheer-

ful aspect of the country, and the beauty of Vienna and its environs, Mr. Liston thus proceeds to describe his impressions of the society :—

“ Vienna, 14th August 1782.

“ Sir R. Keith has been extremely civil to me. Mr. Liston to Mr. Elliot. What I consider the greatest mark of it is, that he has pressed me to stay till Sunday next, that he may have an opportunity of presenting me to the Emperor. . . I have stared at the faces of the society, of Vienna at Madame de Hatzfeld’s, and at Prince d’Auersperg’s assemblies, and have dined and supped with some of the corps diplomatique, and have been introduced to Prince Kaunitz, of whom I think there is even a chance of my becoming a favourite, if I were to remain here. When Sir Robert first carried me to the Prince’s house, he very prudently advertised me that my reception depended upon the humour he might be in ; that he might speak to me, and might not ; that if he did, I *must let him speak*, which I seriously promised. Sir Robert was at great pains to procure me a favourable reception ; and with this view recommended me to the Prince, as having been long attached to Sir Andrew Mitchell at Berlin (who it seems was a favourite of the Prince), etc., etc. I observed the injunction, of ‘letting everybody speak,’ so faithfully, that I even allowed this to pass without any other contradiction than a broad stare in Sir Robert’s face. All attempts to make me be spoken to were long ineffectual ; and I was so mindful of my lesson, that M. de Kaunitz at last asked Sir Robert if I spoke French. Upon

being answered (by Sir Robert) in the affirmative, he asked me how long I had been at Berlin. I answered five years, and so the audience ended. This to be sure is no favourable entry on the road of favour, but, the day after, I received an invitation to dinner (in consequence, I suppose, of Sir Robert's management with the Countess Clari). At dinner he did but once address himself to me, but now and then stared at me, which I returned as you used to do the King of Prussia's looks on certain occasions. When dinner was half over he asked Sir Robert how my name was spelled, and expressed his joy to find at last an English name, of which the orthography was reasonable; and so the dinner ended. Still this is not a gigantic stride towards favour. After the ceremony of washing the teeth, and our removal to the other room, I happened to stand near Madame de Clari's card-table, where he also was, and looked attentively at his coat, which was of singularly fine English cloth. This gave rise to a conversation, which was continued so long afterwards (and adjourned to a window), as to excite the attention of a good part of the company. Princes and Princesses came respectfully up and bowed, and attempted to attract his attention in vain; and to Sir Robert Keith's great surprise (who was not present at this scene) I was asked again to dinner to-morrow."

Mr. Liston
to
Mr. Elliot.

On the 17th of August he wrote again—"I continue to be a kind of favourite of Prince Kaunitz's, and dine there every third day. Sir Robert also carried me to Madame de Thun's,

who is extremely civil. She talks with great feeling and affection of you, and says she knows your motives for upholding Mrs. Elliot (contrary to the opinion of the world); that you never did anything wrong except from excess of virtue, and that this is also the case at present. Sir Robert Keith, too, has spoken of this subject. After I had told him your motives, he said, 'Well, his conduct to be sure is not what is thought *wise*, but it is perhaps better than wise—it is a *better thing*.' They are infinitely uneasy here on the subject of republican politics. It is reported that the Austrian interest at Petersburg is in the last stage of a consumption, and that the Emperor's declining to join the Empress in her rage against the Dutch is likely to make it give up the ghost. My reception by the Emperor was, as Sir Robert informs me, extremely civil. His conversation consisted in questions put to me, very much in the common style, concerning my stay at Berlin, my change of situation to Turin, the difference of climate in the two countries, etc., and contained nothing remarkable, unless it may be considered as remarkable that he seemed perfectly informed of our connections, of the situation you had been in at the Court of Berlin, of your marriage, even of the last éclât. He spoke of you, *au reste*, with the highest praise."

Mr. Liston reached Turin on the 1st of September, and wrote a few days later to Mr. Elliot in raptures with the beauty of the beautiful plain of Lombardy with its magnificent wall of mountains; Turin, too, comes in for a full share of praise, and those who, from the terrace of the

Capuchin convent, have looked upon it as he did, in all the splendour of a September sunset, must agree with him that earth has few scenes to shew more fair. "I felt myself," he says, "transported into the third heavens." The chief drawbacks to his comfort in his new situation consisted in the number of social engagements into which he found himself obliged to enter; and he writes feelingly of the number of royal personages on whose fête days he must appear in a gala dress, each new one costing £20 sterling. "How I am to get to the end of the year I know not." Three times a week the ministerial receptions began so early in the morning that "one has to be dressed all day, which perhaps is less hard on me than on most John Bulls"—I suppose on account of his habitual orderly attire, the neatness of which he sometimes refers to in fun; but Mr. Liston's most serious misfortune appears to me to have consisted in a certain appearance of honesty and common sense, which disposed everybody to confide in him; his hands were perpetually full of other people's love affairs or money matters. My grandfather made him his confidant, Lord Mount-Stuart intrusted him with his accounts, and in those days it appears that a secretary held a very different position in the house of his chief from what is at present the case, since, *bon gré, mal gré*, Mr. Liston was forced at Turin to divide his time between the duties of a Diplomatist and of a "Comptroller General."

The early part of the winter of 1782 found Mr. Elliot at his new mission at Copenhagen; his wife had urged upon him so strongly the danger

to her own health and that of her child, which might arise from a winter journey, that he had consented to leave her till spring under the charge and roof of her mother. A generous nature would have felt grateful for the trust implied in a compliance with her wishes on such a point, but hers was light and arid as her native sands, susceptible of the slightest impression, and of the deepest retaining no trace.

Madame de Verelst wrote to him constantly after his departure, and always with ample details of her daughter's looks, health, etc. That her letters were scarcely of the kind likely to satisfy a sentimental disposition may be gathered from the style of a note which contains hardly anything but the following passage,—“Ma fille se porte bien, s'occupe de sa musique, et bien plus longtemps de sa toilette; je ne crois pas qu'elle vous aime comme par le passé—non; mais je me flatte qu'elle a de l'amitié pour vous; elle sentira qu'une femme n'est estimée qu'autant qu'elle est bien avec son mari.”

Madame de
Verelst to
Mr. Elliot.

Mrs. Eden's hair must have stood on end if she had read the above specimen of German sentiment. Under these circumstances the winter passed. The very beginning of spring was signalized by the unfortunate events which made my grandfather's private history the nine days' wonder of half the capitals of Europe. Thiébault, in his *Séjour de 20 ans à Berlin*, tells the whole story at length, and with great accuracy. Shortly told, it amounts to this:—

When the time approached for the reunion of

husband and wife, Mrs. Elliot positively refused to leave Berlin ; and the letter in which she stated her views, containing many calumnies and misrepresentations, was so worded as to leave little doubt on her husband's mind that she had written under dictation ; at the same time he heard of her misconduct from various sources, and was even warned that the thoroughly unscrupulous person who had obtained so great an influence over her was known to consider her infant child as the chief obstacle to the dissolution of her marriage with Mr. Elliot.

On this hint, Mr. Elliot started at once for Berlin. Arriving there in a shorter time than the distance had ever been accomplished before, he passed through the gates of the town under a feigned name (to avoid giving notice of his return), went straight to his own house, and, in the absence of his wife, possessed himself without difficulty of her papers, among which he found the draft of the letter he had so recently received, in the handwriting of her cousin Baron Kniphausen ; passing from her room to the nursery he lifted his sleeping child out of its bed, and, desiring the English nurse to follow him, ran down stairs, jumped into the carriage which was in waiting, and drove out of Berlin through the gates by which he had entered, but this time, to prevent pursuit, giving his true name and designation—"Elliot, ministre plénipotentiaire de S. M. le Roi d'Angleterre près le Roi de Danemarck, partant pour Copenhague avec son enfant et domestiques." Before his wife had returned from the opera he was on his way to Copenhagen. Having taken this journey at a mo-

ment's notice, for the purpose of securing the safety of his child, but at the imminent risk of ruining himself by a step for which he had neither precedent nor authority, he now made a regular demand for leave of absence to return to Berlin for the arrangement of his affairs. The first of these was the chastisement of Kniphausen, against whom all his wrath was directed, for in not one of his letters does he ever refer to his wife except as an object of pity. The baron, beau comme Apollon, was not gifted with bravery equal to his beauty, and disappeared from Berlin before my grandfather arrived there. After, however, a hot pursuit—from this point I take Thiébault as my guide, translating his narrative almost verbally—Mr. Elliot came up with him at three in the morning at a small road-side inn, where, stopping for a moment to make inquiries, Mr. Elliot was refused admission, on the plea of the whole house having been retained by a single traveller who had lately arrived there. This cautious proceeding convinced Mr. Elliot that he had found his man. Armed with swords and pistols, and a good cane, he entered the Baron's room and demanded instant satisfaction, which being refused, he lost all self-control and fairly broke his cane over his enemy's shoulders; the noise, however, brought so many spectators together as to preclude the possibility of a hostile meeting at the time, and, while Mr. Elliot proceeded to take some repose, the Baron seized the moment to disappear.

In the morning Mr. Elliot returned to Berlin

and recounted his adventures to all who would listen. Kniphausen, too, had returned to Berlin, but he did not remain there long before he discovered that to accept Mr. Elliot's challenge would be a lesser evil than to submit to the outburst of indignation and contempt which his cowardly conduct had provoked; he therefore made up his mind to do so, and, with arms and seconds, the adversaries set out, this time together, for a small village on the confines of Saxony. Mr. Elliot had previously declared that he would listen to no proposals for accommodation on any other condition than that of a complete and full recantation of all the calumnies set forth against himself by Baron Kniphausen in his letters to Mrs. Elliot. Of this recantation he now produced a copy, which he had himself drawn up, and which he insisted should be signed by the Baron. The latter having read it, protested against affixing his name to any such document, and the combatants thereupon took their places. Mr. Elliot gave his adversary the choice of the first shot, of which he availed himself, and shots were exchanged without injury to either. A second attempt at a pacific arrangement was again made, but failed on Mr. Elliot's refusal to alter a single letter of the paper he had written. They therefore resumed their places, and on this occasion Mr. Elliot received a slight wound in the hip, to which, however, he made no allusion; but at this stage of the proceedings his adversary's fears became uncontrollable, and he copied and signed all that was required of him.

The Baron thus wrote himself down a libeller and villain, and his conduct throughout the whole transaction was so cowardly and base, as well as unprincipled, that the society of Berlin turned its back upon him. Prince Henry dismissed him from his service, Prince Ferdinand (the King's youngest brother) addressed Mr. Elliot in the following terms:—

“Friedrichsfeld, 9th July 1783.

“Monsieur—Permettez-moi de vous féliciter d'avoir heureusement terminé votre différence avec le Baron de Kniphausen. La manière dont j'apprends que vous vous êtes conduit vous couvre de gloire, et elle justifie la bonne opinion que j'ai toujours eu de vous; la grandeur d'âme que vous avez témoigné envers votre adversaire fait votre éloge. Je me réjouis de savoir vos jours conservés, etc., etc., etc.,—votre très affectionné ami,

Prince
Ferdinand to
Mr. Elliot.

“FERDINAND.”

And, in still warmer language, the Princess of Prussia wrote for herself and her husband,—“Vos malheurs étaient faits pour vous attirer la compassion de toute âme sensible, et la noblesse de vos procédés l'admiration et l'estime de tout le monde. Vous y avez réussi parfaitement; le Prince (Royal) vous rend toute la justice possible. J'embrasse ma filleule, parlez lui de moi. Mille grâces de ce que vous me dites touchant la naissance de mon fils; ayez de l'amitié pour lui, celle d'un ami galant-homme ne peut que lui être précieux dès qu'il saura l'apprécier.

Potsdam,
12th July.
Princess of
Prussia to
Mr. Elliot.

FRÉDÉRIQUE.”

But while Royalties and Ministers hurried to offer him expressions of sympathy and of approbation, he was laid prostrate by a severe attack of illness, from which he had been suffering at the time of his departure for Berlin, and of which he had been totally unmindful during the late agitations; for some days he was seriously ill.

During his stay in Berlin all necessary steps were taken for his divorce, and, when his health was re-established, he returned to Denmark on the best footing with his mother-in-law, with Prince Henry, and all his old Berlin connections. His wife subsequently married her cousin, and both lived in strict retirement until her death, which took place in a few years after these events.

Thus again Hugh Elliot stood alone in life; his household gods lay shattered round him; the mother who would have mourned over him was gone; and though his family sorrowed for his sorrows, it was with a feeling not unmixed with congratulation at the severance of so deplorable a connection. "Thank God," says Isabella, after his return from Berlin, "you have got safely away from all those strange people."

What was thought at home of this uncommon romance in diplomatic life, may be gathered from a letter from Mr. Liston, written from London, shortly before he went to Spain:—

"London, 23d May 1783.

Liston
to
Elliot.

"The day before yesterday I had an audience of leave of the King (as they mean to dispatch me immediately). He kept me (I believe) pretty

long, and went through many subjects, among others your journey, with which I was amazed to find him so well acquainted. The first accounts he had had of it were from a German gazette ; then from the Leyden paper ; then from your two private letters to Mr. Fox,* both of which were shewn to him ; and he must also have heard of it from other quarters, from the particulars I found he knew. I told him that it† was a measure of absolute necessity, and that you could not possibly do otherwise ; which he seemed to assent to, and I was very happy to find him speak with so little rigidity on the subject. Both the courts concerned have used friendly language. The opportunity I had of talking so long with the King has had the same effect with me as the successive conversations you have had used to have on you ; that is, to convince me of his extensive knowledge of many things one would not expect him to be master of, and of his sound good sense in many others. I know not from what circumstance it was, but I felt myself inspired with more courage to speak to him than I usually have to people that are placed even one step above me."

* The Coalition Government came in in March 1783.

† This refers to Mr. Elliot's hasty journey, *without leave*, from Copenhagen to Berlin.



CHAPTER THE TENTH.

1782 to 1785.

COPENHAGEN.

THE first letters which my grandfather wrote from Copenhagen in the winter of 1782 and 1783 give an agreeable account of his impressions of the place. Even through the clouds and mist of winter he gazed with pleasure on a fertile and undulating country, a sea alive with shipping, and a handsome capital surrounded by country residences standing in wooded and picturesque parks. The contrast offered by such scenes to those he had lately left was sensibly grateful to him; and when in July 1783 he returned from the painful agitations of Berlin to his beautiful villa at Christiansholm, it seemed to him like "a haven of peace to a shipwrecked mariner."

The first court reception, or "appartement" as it was called, at which he assisted, is described by him as brilliant and striking, though on general occasions the vast apartments were ill lighted and worse filled, neither courtiers nor

candles being sufficiently numerous for their large dimensions.

The Royal family consisted of the King, Christian VII. (who had married and divorced Matilda of England, sister of George III.), of his stepmother, Juliana Maria of Brunswick-Wolfenbützel, widow of Frederick V., of her son Prince Frederick and his wife, and of the young Prince Royal and his sister—children of the King and of Queen Matilda. The Prince Royal was, at the time of Mr. Elliot's arrival in Denmark, a slight slim boy of fourteen, of noble and easy carriage, "very like his English relations." The Princess, "a little fairy, having, at the age of ten or eleven, possessed herself of all graces and all charms, dancing, talking, and holding her circle in perfection."*

The circumstances under which my grandfather made his *début* in the society of Gopenhagen were not such as to dispose him towards taking an active part in its pleasures.

Dispirited and suffering in body as well as in mind, he held aloof as far as was compatible with his position from the world around him, and oc-

* She was born a few months before the Revolution took place which cast her mother from the throne, and the nursing and rearing of this infant had been the only comfort of Queen Matilda during her melancholy confinement at Cronburg. She afterwards said, that the parting with her child was the severest pang she felt, when removed from Denmark to a safer and more dignified prison in her brother's castle of Zell. Some years after her death, Coxe, the traveller, was told at Zell by an eye-witness of the fact that the Queen constantly apostrophized and wept over the portraits of her two children, for whom she retained to the end of her life the warmest affection.

cupied himself with "his child, his books, and his thoughts"—he relates with pride the growth of his little girl's vocabulary, and the increasing intelligence of her remarks—and the "dear pretty little Bella" becomes a prominent personage in the letters he writes and receives.

To his family he describes himself as resuming old studies for her sake—learning, that he might instruct.

It is very probable that the idea of collecting and of preserving his correspondence occurred to him at this time. He frequently says, in his letters, that his thoughts are turned to the past; that he is busied in studying it by the light of experience; and as the collection of letters which I have described as chronologically arranged, and bound in volumes, terminates with the correspondence of 1784, it seems not unreasonable to suppose that its formation was one of his chief occupations during the interval of quiet and leisure which followed on his return to Denmark, immediately after his divorce. The work was not ill suited to his frame of mind; it was an attempt to keep a waif from the gallant bark which had set out in "life's morning," with "youth at the prow and pleasure at the helm."

Ten years had elapsed since his first going forth from home, and, as he reviewed their flight, what varied scenes must his memory have recalled—the Cossack tents on the Danube, his hairbreadth escapes by land and water, the brilliant courts of Warsaw and of Vienna, where he left so deep an impression, that years afterwards

travellers found, in the title of his friend, a passport to the best society ; the gallicized Munich, gay, vicious, and superstitious ; the barrack-like Berlin, where everybody, not on parade, was carousing and gambling ; and whence philosophy failed to banish ennui and indigestion ; but where, across every scene, there flitted a phantom with fair face and golden hair, like the treacherous nymphs of her country's fables, luring the traveller on to trouble and sorrow.

One can fancy him in whom, as Lord Stormont said, the "elements were blended," dreaming over these things in the beautiful solitude of Christiansholm, while, half in tenderness and half in mockery, and wholly sad, he set himself to "weigh the weight of the fire, to measure the blast of the wind, to call back the day that was past !"

While thus occupied, public events seem to have lost much of their interest for him. "It is our destiny to fall into a Pitt, or be caught by a Fox, unless Boreas should take us up again," he wrote ; and none of these things excited him—disheartened and disenchanted, the world to him was a stage, and all the men but players.

In the meanwhile his English letters bore no trace of any such *indifferentism*. The last letters which I have quoted were written during the short government of Lord Shelburne, to be so soon succeeded by the ill-fated coalition—the strongest of governments, as regarded parliamentary support, the weakest in the favour of the King and people. Mr. Eden, as is well known, was one of the active

Lord S. came in in 1782 and was turned out by the coalition in March 1783.

promoters of the coalition ; and neither he nor any other of my grandfather's correspondents had any misgivings as to its success when it should be once fairly launched.

While the new ministry was in process of construction, Isabella wrote feelingly of the mischief done to London society by the excess of party strife.

1783.

"At present," she wrote on March the 6th, "this country is much like the sea that surrounds us—nothing settled, and party running very high. Eden's friends and my brother's faction of last year have joined forces, but what the result will be is not yet determined. . . . Nothing can equal the strangeness of the scene here for the last twelvemonth—balls, assemblies, etc. The Prince of Wales goes to all the great houses, and there is a ball every Tuesday night for him, where he gives the list."

April 1783.

A month later she wrote again—"I continue to live as usual, very quiet, and am surrounded by bustle, which, this last six weeks, has been of a most unpleasant kind. Had you been in England you would have agitated yourself to death. Indeed, the most phlegmatic characters were so. The coalition are now what is called in ; and I own I am a sufficiently good subject to wish there may never again be such a scene. However, I make no reflections on what is called politics, as being able to determine what is really the good of the country is quite out of my reach. Mr. Eden kisses hands on Friday, on being made Vice-Treasurer of Ireland. He got credit for having been

the means of uniting the two parties. During the crisis the union was wonderful. Time will shew how it will turn out. Your principal has great knowledge and power of reading character, with an unbounded genius; what the rest of his character may be I do not know, but all his greatest enemies are now much attached to him ; the scene is very perplexing. However, I think one goes more along with him in it, than with the persons who united with him. Nancy Elliot* is going to marry Sir David Carnegie, a Scotch gentleman of a very good character and large fortune." Fox.

The India bill, which was foreseen to be a danger, passed through the Commons triumphantly, and Sir Gilbert (who had returned in the summer from the Continent in renovated health) wrote a detailed account of the measure to his brother, under the impression that he was to be one of the parliamentary directors (the seven kings) to be appointed under Mr. Fox's bill. The fate of the measure, and the part taken by the King and the House of Lords, are so well known, as to make it useless to give extracts from the letters which refer to them, since they throw no new light on the subject.

The party who had a large majority in the House of Commons had ceased to govern, and the minority furnished a ministry.

The House of Commons passed a strong resolution denouncing a dissolution, though, as Mr. Eden wrote, "after all it would be a more

* Daughter of Mr. A. Elliot, and grandmother of the present Earl of Southesk. She died in 1860.

constitutional course to pack a Parliament, than to govern in defiance of one."

The minister was, in the eyes of his opponents, an inexperienced boy, and his great talents could not be expected to compensate for the entire dearth of ability in the greater part of his colleagues. "Habits of business make men of business," wrote my grandfather, not very much distressed by a change of Government which excluded Mr. Fox from office. "I cannot agree with you there," said Mr. Eden, "for who ever had such habits of business as some of our friends during a series of years, and yet—"

The defeated majority had no doubt that a very short interval would suffice to restore them to power. Confidence and glee were on the side of Opposition. Sir Gilbert was keener than he had ever been; "if," wrote Mr. Eden, "his passions were equal to his abilities, he would play a leading part." The result of the general election dashed their hopes to the ground, and they learnt that the people and the King were equally averse to the rule of a party who had compromised their principles to establish their power.

One consequence of the general election was to deprive Sir Gilbert of a seat, an event less deplored by himself than by his friends. "My philosophy or my indolence," he said, "makes me well satisfied with the prospect of some leisure for self-improvement," etc.; and he proceeded in the ensuing summer to enjoy the sea breezes at Swanage, and the shades of the New Forest, with all the glee of an emancipated school-boy. In the autumn he

and Lady Elliot accompanied Lady Harris to Bath, and from thence he wrote a letter to his brother, in which he describes a visit from their old school-fellow Mirabeau.*

"I was lately, agreeably surprised by a note dated *Hatton Street, Holborn*, from our old persecuted school-fellow Mirabeau, who has fled to England for safety, and has nothing but his pen to trust to for support. I found him as ardent a friend as I left him, and as little altered as possible by twenty years of life, of which six have been consumed in prison, and the rest in personal and domestic troubles. He is very much ripened in his abilities, which are really considerable, and has acquired a great store of knowledge. . . . Mirabeau is as overbearing in his conversation as awkward in his graces, as ugly and misshapen in face and person as dirty in his dress, and withal as perfectly *suffisant* as we remember him twenty years ago at school. I loved him, however, then, and so did you, though, as he confesses, you sometimes quarrelled with him, being always somewhat less patient in admitting extreme pretensions than me. His courage, fortitude, spirit, talents, application, and above all his wrongs and sufferings, should rather increase than weaken our affection for him, and I am really happy in welcoming and perhaps serving him here. I brought him with me the other day to Bath, where he made such hasty love to Harriet, whom he had little doubt of subduing

Sir Gilbert
Elliot to
Hugh Elliot.

* In the course of the autumn of 1783 my grandfather had had some correspondence with Mirabeau, a long letter from whom will be found in the Appendix.

in a week, and where he so totally silenced my John Bull wife, who understands a Frenchman no better than Molly housemaid, where he so scared my little boy with caressing him, so completely disposed of me from breakfast to supper, and so astonished all our friends, that I could hardly keep the peace in his favour; and if he had not been called unexpectedly to town this morning, I am sure my wife's endurance, for I cannot call it civility, would not have held out another day. He says he shall sell his estate when his father dies, settle for good in England to be naturalized, it being absolutely impossible to live in France with any sort of security. In the meantime he is writing books and pamphlets for bread."

Aug. 1784.

While the Elliots and Harrises had been spending their summer together, Isabella had remained in the neighbourhood of London, occupied in preparations for a journey to Copenhagen, where, at her brother's request, she proposed to pass the winter. She had actually taken her passage when she was attacked by a violent fever, which left her entirely prostrated in mind and body. For some time her life was despaired of, and, though after a time she rallied to a considerable extent, her nervous system never recovered the shock. In the preceding year she had suffered from severe illness; and while in weak health, her warm affections and acute sensibilities had been greatly affected by the troubles and prolonged absence of her favourite brother; the separation from him, the loss by death of those members of her family most tenderly united to herself, and, farther back still,

certain painful recollections connected with her last summer at Tunbridge (previous to her mother's death), had undermined her once gay spirits. A sense of duty, a naturally sociable temper, and plenty of resources in herself, enabled her for a long time to combat the despondent feelings which occasionally arose in her mind; but a healthy body is needed to struggle with a sick heart, and when her health failed her spirits gave way. The short remainder of her life was spent in retirement from the world, though she continued to see her family, and occasionally to write to her brother Hugh in a cheerful and uncomplaining tone.

Happily for him, the sad tidings of her illness reached him at a moment when his mind was occupied by events of considerable political importance, then enacting in the capital of Denmark, to explain which, together with the share he bore in them, it is necessary to give a slight sketch of the internal politics of that court at the time of his arrival there in the autumn of 1782.

The revolution, as it was called, of 1772, though in point of fact it had no greater result than to substitute the authority of the Queen Dowager for that of the Queen Consort, had terminated in the banishment of Queen Matilda, and the execution of her favourite, Count Struensee. From that time the Queen Dowager step-mother of the King, had attained uncontrolled influence over him, and with it the entire direction of the Government of the country.

The King, who in 1782 is described in Mr. Elliot's letters as hopelessly insane or imbecile, was

nevertheless made to go through the pageantry of a part, for the realities of which he was utterly incompetent. The constitution of the country was purely despotic; the King's will superseded law. When the King in Council uttered the words "*le Roi le veut*," a close was at once put to discussion; a royal order, with the sign-manual affixed, was absolute; and this, particularly distinguished by the appellation of an order of cabinet, was the instrument by which Denmark had been governed for many years. Persons devoted to the interests of the Queen Dowager, and of her son Prince Frederick, were placed about the person of the King, in the highest offices of state, and the Prince Royal, the King's son, was held in a state of pupillage, which, in the case of an heir-apparent, was unusual in that country, even at his early age.

By the laws of the land it was enacted that a Prince of the blood might be confirmed at the age of thirteen—that ceremony entitling him to take his seat in Council; but in the case of the Prince Royal, the period of minority was protracted till he had attained his sixteenth year.

Mr. Elliot was not long at Copenhagen before he discovered that the existing system of government was odious to the majority of the people, that the principal nobles were disaffected, and that the most considerable men in the country were secretly conspiring to effect its overturn, so soon as the young Prince should have attained his majority.

With the internal affairs of Denmark the

English minister could have nothing to do ; but the ill-will of Frederick the Great, the flickering friendship of the Empress of Russia, and the great maritime power of the house of Bourbon, made the English government, whether that of the Duke of Portland or of Mr. Pitt, attach considerable importance to the preservation of friendly relations with the Scandinavian kingdoms.

These relations were greatly imperilled by the state of affairs in Denmark. The Queen Dowager and her party were entirely devoted to Prussian interests, the King of Prussia, by constant attentions to the Queen and her favourites, having succeeded in establishing a powerful influence at Copenhagen. He was, in fact, the *Deus ex machina* of the Danish cabinet.

Count Bernstorff, whose position, fortune, and character, had enabled him to carry on a powerful opposition to the Government, and whose condemnation of the Policy of the Neutral League had given great offence to Frederick the Great, had been banished at that king's instigation, and he was the first person of note and consequence who broached to Mr. Elliot the projects in formation for making the young Prince Royal the instrument of his grandmother's downfall. At the time of Count Bernstorff's dismissal the young Prince, then a boy, promised him his future support ; and such confidence was placed by the Count in the steadiness of the Prince Royal's character, that from henceforth they corresponded constantly on the most important subjects, and, for two years before the Prince attained his majority, Count Bernstorff

furnished, in secret, daily instructions for His Royal Highness's guidance, which he implicitly followed; receiving the letters by means of a trustworthy valet, and always consigning them to the flames immediately after having read, and committed their contents to memory.

The certainty that a change of Government would be advantageous to English interests led the Prince's party to make the English minister their only foreign confidant; he of course stated the fact to his Government, and received from them strict orders to take no part in any of the steps proposed, simply to watch and wait.

The extreme youth of the Prince Royal, who in 1783 was only in his 15th year, made Mr. Elliot very distrustful of the success of an enterprise which depended on the discretion and resolution of so young a Prince; nevertheless signs of spirit and tact were not wanting in his conduct.

The Queen Dowager had endeavoured to inculcate in him sentiments of deference and submission to his uncle Prince Frederick, and the public had remarked with disapprobation that the Prince Royal was made to kiss his uncle's hand when joining him at the theatre or on other occasions. The Prince himself disliked the ceremony, an unusual one in Danish families, and had quickly perceived the impression it produced on others; and having therefore determined to get rid of this act of homage, he, one evening that Prince Frederick presented him his hand to kiss, threw it from him with such violence as nearly to overturn his uncle, who was both weak and deformed.

Other and similar actions gave the people an insight into the feelings which the young Prince, in spite of occasional ebullitions, held under stern control.

As the period of his majority approached, the situation of the Prince became extremely critical, but in proportion to the increase of difficulty was the increase of resolution on his part. Besides the correspondence which he had kept up for two years with Count Bernstorff, he communicated personally and by letter with some of the leading men of the country, in spite of being surrounded at the time by spies and creatures of the ruling party.

About a week before the Prince came of age, the Queen Dowager appeared to have conceived a suspicion of his correspondence with Count Bernstorff, and put some hard questions to him, which he answered with so much unconcern and adroitness as to dispel every suspicion. An unexpected summons to Court of one of the conspirators threw the whole party into unfounded alarm, and the very evening before the revolution took place, M. de Schach-Rathlow, second only to Count Bernstorff in the direction of the movement, but who still ostensibly acted with the Queen Dowager's party, was engaged in conversation with one of the ministers, when a servant brought and delivered to him a packet of most important and secret papers. On the minister shewing some surprise, M. de Schach-Rathlow with great composure drew off his attention, and pocketing the papers, contrived presently to leave the room; he told Mr. Elliot a few days afterwards that these were the very papers to be

signed the next evening by the King in council, which by an oversight were thus conveyed to him in the middle of an assembly. This scene was witnessed by Mr. Elliot. On the 14th of April, the Prince Royal took his seat in Council, and at once rising in his place desired to read a memorial which he drew from his bosom.

This instrument contained the reasons he alleged for a total change of Government, together with a list of the persons he entreated his father to call into his councils. A second memorial followed, by which the King was urged to enact that no future orders by himself in the cabinet should be valid without the countersign of the Prince Royal. So dignified and firm was the attitude of the Prince, and so great the surprise of all present, that no serious objections were made. Those faintly urged by Prince Frederick were silenced with warmth by his nephew. The King signed the documents presented to him, and the Prince Royal at once delivered his credentials as minister to M. de Schach-Rathlow.

The Prince then waited on the Queen, and acquainted her himself with what was passed; and "as her passions were violent, a scene of considerable confusion ensued in the palace."

Nevertheless, he insisted that a court ball, which was to take place that night, should not be postponed, and assisted at it himself with the utmost composure. So secretly and quietly had these important transactions been conducted, that many of the Danish nobility were first made aware of what had occurred by the arrival of one of the

new ministers at an assembly given by Count Molcke.

So many interests were affected by this unlooked for change of government, such bitter resentments and violent passions had been excited, that the Prince's personal safety was not deemed secure in the palace ; and for several nights his partisans guarded his door. "The person," wrote Mr. Elliot to Lord Carmarthen, April 24, 1784, "who has principally the ear and confidence of the Prince Royal, has made no secret to me of his apprehensions; and declared that it was the determination of their party rather to perish than to abandon the young Prince again into the hands of people, whose passions are now too inflamed to know any bounds.

"For my own part, I have thought myself under the necessity of taking a decision without waiting for any instructions from home, as there was no possibility of their arriving before the conclusion of this important transaction. I therefore desired this gentleman to let His Royal Highness know, that should the opposite party have come to any overt act of violence, I should have asked leave to appear openly in his defence ; and, by the fortunate arrival of a number of English ships at this critical conjuncture, there was little doubt but that I might have procured essential assistance from their crews, and other persons attached to me in Copenhagen.

"Thanks be to God, the personal resolution, constancy, and prudence of the Prince Royal have alone overcome every obstacle."

The most remarkable feature in this revolution is the part taken in it by the Prince at the early age of sixteen, after two years of careful and secret preparation for the final blow.

The English Government expressed great satisfaction with the conduct of their minister throughout these events.

Lord Carmarthen remarks that the singular degree of confidence reposed in him by Count Bernstorff, from his first arrival in the country, proved the high opinion which that eminent person had conceived of Mr. Elliot's ability, judgment, and secrecy.

The King highly approved of the line taken by his representative, and the policy now inaugurated by the new government in Denmark, combined with the warm feelings entertained by the young prince for his English relations—"Am I not half an Englishman?" he said—gave every hope of a cordial alliance between the two Crowns.

All my grandfather's private letters mention the warm approval which his conduct, during these delicate transactions, had met with at home, "from the King downwards." Sir J. Harris observed—somewhat in character—"that Hugh Elliot had not made half enough of his share in them;" and Mr. Eden wrote from Beckenham a letter of cordial congratulations.

It was the last which my grandfather received from him before he returned on leave to England in 1785; and, with one single exception, it gives a bright and pleasant picture of the family, under the impression of which we may happily leave

them. Of himself Mr. Eden says—"Whatever may be the ups and downs of my political career, my cheerfulness will never suffer." His orchard was "a garden of the Hesperides," where a band of merry handsome children plucked fruit all day long; his farm, strange to say, was profitable, and all the time which Mrs. Eden could spare from home and children was spent in trying to make others as happy as herself. The marriage of Admiral Digby to one of Mr. Andrew Elliot's daughters gave her great satisfaction. "The Admiral," wrote Mr. Eden, "is a good man, and as rich as Pactolus; he does not consider a set of features or the tincture of a complexion as essential ingredients in matrimony. Mr. Andrew Elliot has had luck in the marriages of Lady Cathcart, Lady Carnegie, and Mrs. Digby. I am glad of it, for he has great merits." *

Mrs. Eden was, however, sometimes called upon for condolence instead of congratulations; and the frequent mortifications which her brother Robert met with were confided to her sisterly ear, but without obtaining much pity from Mr. Eden—"Poor Bob has a rage for matrimony, and offers himself so suddenly to every young woman that they are quite frightened, and scream 'No!'"

I have now completed the task which I originally proposed to myself, namely, to draw from

* Lady Cathcart and Lady Carnegie were the daughters of Mr. Elliot by his second wife, an American lady, Miss Plumstead, who had been sought in marriage by General Washington before she married Mr. Elliot.

my grandfather's correspondence a sketch of his early career.

It appears to me that no fitter moment could have been found to review the story of his youth, than that at which I believe him to have collected the materials of which I have made use ; that he should have done so when he did, was one of those incidents, unregarded at the time, which derive from subsequent events a deep significance.

Already the friends of his early days, or most of them, were gone—father, mother, brother, had passed away—Isabella's days were numbered—the new ties he had formed for himself were dissolved—the most intimate of his companions and correspondents were dead, and those who remained, had been long separated from him, and had settled down into lives in which he had borne no part. Louis d'Yve had ceased to write of "his too amiable aunt ;" and Mr. Pitt of his patriot band.

Countess
Neipperg.

The Elliots and Edens continued to be as dear and as tenderly attached to him as of old, but time, distance, and constant separation, could not fail to tell on the frequency of their correspondence. Sir Gilbert, always an indolent letter-writer, found an excuse for protracted silences in the monotony of his country life. Mr. Eden, busily occupied both at home and abroad in important political transactions, had no time for the cheerful, pleasant letters which in idle days at Beckenham he used to write for himself and his wife.

When family letters cease to be records of our daily paths, and become occasional *cartes du*

pays, their charm is gone; we learn the general features of the country over which our friends are travelling—we see its outline, but lose the colouring, the distinctness, which familiarity with details alone can give. My grandfather may possibly have been of this opinion, since he ceased henceforth to bestow any care on the arrangement of the letters which he from time to time received from his relations.

A careful examination of the mass of papers which still lie in his trunks, would be a work of considerable toil and time; but as far as I can judge from a hasty glance through them, it appears that the most interesting portions of his correspondence, subsequent to 1785, relate to political transactions connected with the affairs of the Court at which he was for the time resident.

The last years of his mission to Denmark were, perhaps, the most eventful of his diplomatic career; and though the letters and papers which relate to that period are not included in the correspondence bound up in volumes, to the examination of which I had intended to confine myself, yet, as it appears to me that this part of his story connects itself naturally with the account I have already given of his earlier relations with the Court of Denmark, I have been induced to select such portions as would be fitly blended into a narrative, which will be found in the following chapter.



SWEDISH CORRESPONDENCE.

IN 1785, as I have said, my grandfather came home on leave; and during his stay in London he had several interviews with Mr. Pitt, with whose great abilities he was much struck. He returned to Denmark in 1786 naturally impressed by the views of the minister, the great object of whose policy at that time was the preservation of the balance of power. The transactions to which the papers preserved by him, under the title of the "Swedish correspondence," relate, did not take place till 1788.

On the breaking out of the war between Russia and the Porte in 1787, Gustavus III.* of

* Gustavus the Third succeeded his father in 1771. He received the news of his accession to the throne at Paris, where he was passing a winter under the incognito of Count Haga. And Madame Du Deffand alludes with pity in her letters to "ce pauvre prince royal, qui pour être devenu Roi est obligé de s'en retourner dans son triste pays." His agreeable and rather courtly manners procured him much greater success in the polite society of Paris than was obtained by another royal traveller, Count Falkenstein (Joseph the Second). Shortly after his return home, he effected a revolution in the Swedish state, by which he greatly extended the royal authority; and he introduced considerable changes in courtly etiquette, and

Sweden who had married a sister of Christian VII., set himself with assiduity to cultivate the friendship of the Court of Copenhagen, and to impress on that government the importance of seizing a moment when Russia was involved in a great and distant war, caused by her own ambition, to weaken her power in the North by some decisive blow which should effectually check her insidious and over-reaching policy. To effect this object, the closest union between the two northern kingdoms, and their common action, became necessary, and trusting to the influence of his personal qualities, which had already contributed to the most brilliant successes of his reign, the Swedish king determined to pay a neighbourly visit to his Danish relations, with the confident hope of inoculating the young Prince Royal with his system of policy.

Supple and adroit, yet daring and persevering, his personal advocacy of his views was calculated to produce considerable effect on those with whom he came in contact; and the gift of eloquence, which he possessed in a singular degree, joined to something brilliant and romantic in his appearance

even in the national costume. His love of pomp and ceremonial, with the fatigue of a day at court, are amusingly described in Coxe's *Travels*, vol. iii. In a private letter to Mr. Elliot, dated August 1784, Coxe, after descanting on the king's extraordinary powers of conversation, says—"Nevertheless I must say of him, as you did of another king, that he is 'very meretricious.'" Coxe was presented, at a royal reception, to the king's son, a child of six years old, who addressed him as follows—"M. le Capitaine—Je suis enchanté de vous voir, vous avez fait un long voyage." The Englishman stared; but Count Sparre, the Prince's preceptor, explained with pride that *he* had suggested the appropriate compliment to the great navigator, betraying that he had taken Coxe for Cooke.

Letter from
W. Coxe to
H. Elliot.

and address, made him precisely the character likely to influence a young man.

Not only, however, did the king fail in converting the Danish ministers to his views, but the Prince Royal, though possessing great admiration and affection for his uncle, did not for a moment listen to his schemes. Denmark was bound to Russia by treaties and by interest, and her policy was one of peace.*

Baffled in his design of creating a strict alliance with Denmark, Gustavus determined to cast the die alone, but not till, in the spring of 1788, he had again personally, and strongly, but still unsuccessfully, urged upon his nephew, the Prince Royal, the importance of a close and active alliance between the Courts of Copenhagen and Stockholm. The Prince Royal, who was at the time in Norway, occupied in reviewing the troops commanded by Prince Charles of Hesse,† replied to these representations by enforcing the wisdom of a pacific policy, and offering his services as mediator between Sweden and Russia; and, on his return to Copenhagen, the Prince gave his suffrage in council for maintaining the treaties with Russia, a course which finally determined that of the Danish ministry. It afterwards appeared that, during all these negotiations, Denmark never gave the slightest intimation of those articles in the

* In 1773 Russia ceded Schleswig and Holstein to Denmark in return for the Duchy of Oldenburg and the promise of naval and military aid under certain specified contingencies. This last article appears to have been secret.—See Appendix B.

† Prince Charles of Hesse was brother-in-law to the kings of Sweden and of Denmark.

treaty of 1773 by which she was bound to give military aid to Russia if attacked in the north; and this concealment gave rise to a charge of treachery, which was subsequently brought by the King of Sweden against the Prince Royal, and with some semblance of justice, since the King had scarcely joined his army in Swedish Finland,* whence he proposed to commence his land operations against Russia, when the Court of Copenhagen published a declaration to the effect that within a month from its date, Prince Charles of Hesse would invade Sweden on the side of Norway with the stipulated number of auxiliary forces. A mutiny among the officers of Gustavus' army, many of whom were averse to war with Russia, and were even in secret correspondence with that Court, broke out almost simultaneously with the announcement of the military preparations of Denmark. Nothing could well seem more desperate than the position of the Swedish King; he was a prisoner in his own camp, while a treacherous enemy threatened his kingdom, and while the Swedish Senate itself, which had been deprived of its powers and reduced to a mere cipher by the revolution of 1772, shewed symptoms of a disposition to take advantage of the King's difficulties to repossess itself of its lost authority, at the expense of the kingly power.

Before, however, any decisive steps had been taken, Gustavus contrived to escape from Finland, and appeared unexpectedly at Stockholm, where,

* At the Peace of Abo, 1743, the river Kymen formed the limit of Russia and Sweden.

knowing the nobility, who were numerous and powerful, to be generally indisposed towards him, he threw himself at once upon the support of the citizens, and of the people at large, over whom he possessed a great ascendancy. He dispatched every soldier from the capital to the frontier, and with all the thrilling eloquence which he knew so well how to wield, he entrusted the guardianship of the Queen and her children to his people.

Nothing could exceed the enthusiasm of the citizens, who themselves manned the batteries and works; and, on the return of the officers from Finland, the public feeling was so strongly displayed against them, that it became unsafe for them to appear in public in their uniforms.

At this moment of imminent danger to Sweden, the influence of two great Powers made itself felt on her behalf.

After the accession of Frederick William to the throne of Prussia, and the appointment by him of Count Hertzberg to the post of First Minister, the Courts of Berlin and of St. James' had drawn together.

The new King and his Minister were in policy and personal feelings as much opposed to France and Russia, as Frederick the Great had been to England; and England, Prussia, and Holland had lately entered into an alliance, the object of which was the preservation of the balance of power against the encroachments of Catherine II., and of the House of Bourbon. The English ministry had, throughout the year, impressed on their Minister at Copenhagen their determination not

to let Sweden be destroyed by any combination of powers against her. The English Minister at Berlin, Mr. Ewart, wrote strongly in the same sense of the views entertained by the Prussian Government, and it was on the urgent representations of Count Hertzberg, and of Mr. Ewart, and also with the full approbation of Count Bernstorff, who appears to have acted a very insincere part; that Mr. Elliot determined to set out for Stockholm, there being at the moment no representative of England there, for the purpose of obtaining a personal interview with the King, and of prevailing on him to accept the mediation of England and Prussia, instead of, as he had threatened to do, seeking the good offices of France and Spain.

“The pressing circumstances of His Swedish Majesty,”—wrote Mr. Elliot to Lord Carmarthen Nov., 1788.
—“and the immediate danger to which the balance of the north was exposed, left me no time to wait for further instructions than those contained in your lordship’s despatches. Indeed, the very positive though general instructions given me, to prevent by every means a change in the relative situation of the northern nations, invested me, as I conceived, with full power to act according to the exigency of circumstances.”

Before leaving Denmark, Mr. Elliot received from Mr. Ewart an intimation of the decision of the Prussian Cabinet for immediate action, and was informed that a declaration was on its way from Berlin to St. Petersburg and Copenhagen, announcing that a body of 16,000 troops would enter Holstein simultaneously with the

advance of the Prince of Hesse in the dominions of Sweden.

Mr. Elliot, on arriving at Stockholm, found that the King had departed for Dalecarlia, where, after the example of his great predecessor, he had descended to the bottom of the deepest mines, and, by his spirited appeals to their loyalty, had excited the rough Dalecarians into a fever of enthusiasm. Armed with their implements of labour, and, in some instances, with antique and rusty weapons preserved among them for centuries, they formed an uncouth and grotesque but devoted body-guard to the King.

Nov. 29,
1788.
Hugh Elliot
to Lord
Carmarthen.

“On my arrival in Sweden, after a search of eleven days I traced the King wandering from place to place, endeavouring to animate his unarmed peasants to hopeless resistance. His very couriers were ignorant of his abode. At length, exhausted with fatigue and illness, I reached the King at Carlstadt, upon the 29th of September. Here I found his carriage ready to convey him to a place of greater security, without generals, without troops, and with few attendants; he was devoid of every means of defence. The King's own words were, that, ‘I found him in the same situation with James the Second, when he was obliged to fly his kingdom, and abandon his crown.’ He was on the point of falling a victim to the ambition of Russia, the treachery of Denmark, and the factious treason of his nobility. In the sincerity of distress the King also added, ‘to the mistakes of his own conduct.’ Backed as I presumed myself to be by the joint concert of the Kings of Great Britain

and Prussia, I did not limit the expressions dictated by the animating conviction of the reality of my powers, and replied with confidence—"Sire, prêtez-moi votre couronne, je vous la rendrai avec lustre." On further explanation, the King consented to adopt all those measures which I thought most suitable to his situation. I therefore undertook to open an immediate negociation for prevailing upon the Prince of Hesse to abandon his design upon Gottenburg, to consent to an armistice, and finally to withdraw his troops from Norway.

"At that time no suspicion was entertained in Sweden of the Prussian declaration; but I concluded, both from the purport of your Lordship's letters, from the extracts of Mr. Pitt's communicated by Mr. Ewart, but especially from the very able information communicated to me by this gentleman, that the Cabinets of Berlin and London were determined to maintain the independence of Sweden, and the balance of the North; and I resolved to second those views, by the firm, though cautious measures, which the exigency of the crisis required. The Prince of Hesse had already summoned Gottenburg before I ventured to acquaint His Highness with the consequent danger to which he exposed the King of Denmark's dominions, and before I took any part in encouraging the Swedes to unanimity, or in directing their resistance. To so circumscribed a period had the distresses of the King reduced the possibility of retrieving his affairs, that had I reached Carltstadt twenty-four hours later than I did, or been less fortunate in concluding the first armistice before the expiration of

forty-eight hours, Gottenburg must have fallen ; and I have the authority of the King, seconded by the voice of the whole country, to say, in that case there would have been no safety for the sovereign in his own dominions, and that nothing less than a successful war, carried on by foreign powers, could have rescued Sweden from a dismemberment by Russia and Denmark."

* * * *

* * * *

It may be as well to interrupt the narrative, as Mr. Elliot relates it in the dispatch quoted, to remark that, while he had been occupied in urging on the Danish princes the danger of advance, the King of Sweden had arrived in Gottenburg, where his presence was wholly unlooked for, and had, with his usual success, infused a spirit of determined resistance into the inhabitants of the place. The herald sent by Prince Charles of Hesse to summon the town, was led blindfold into the presence of the King, and informed that the place would be defended to the last extremity.

The first representations of Mr. Elliot, at the head-quarters of the Danish army, were by no means successful. The apparent moderation of Count Bernstorff previous to Mr. Elliot's departure for Sweden was repudiated by the conduct of the royal princes at the head of the army; and, having warned the princes that the consequences of an attack on the King of Sweden's dominions would be a rupture with England and Prussia, Mr. Elliot joined the King in Gottenburg, and

prepared to await with him the attack of the enemy.

"I knew, my lord, how decisive the appearance of an English minister, at that trying moment, would be at Gottenburg—it re-united the well-disposed, and disheartened the disaffected. An early acquaintance with the art of war and science of engineering, enabled me to point out the most important positions for defence; and the voluntary offer of assistance from the gallant spirit of the English seamen, then in that harbour, ready to man the batteries under my command, would, I trust, have helped to render the Danish attack of a very doubtful issue, had those very preparations not had the more desirable effect of inducing the Prince of Hesse to treat for an armistice of eight days,* in which interval the Prussian declaration arrived, and I was confessed to have been no less the saviour of Holstein than of Gottenburg, Sweden, and its sovereign. * * *

"The Prince Royal, in the presence of his officers, called me 'l'ami commun du Nord.'

"Six weeks after my arrival in Sweden, a victorious army of 12,000 men, animated by the presence of the Prince, were checked in their progress by my single efforts, were induced to evacuate the Swedish territories, and consented to

* The Prince of Hesse's letter, proposing to Mr. Elliot to join himself and the Prince royal at Båhus to treat of an armistice, is dated 7th October. That armistice, concluded under Mr. Elliot's mediation and guarantee, was prolonged for a month, and the final convention for the evacuation of Sweden was signed at Uddevalla in November.

a truce of six months in order that the mediating powers might have time to establish the peace of the North on a solid basis.

"The courier who is charged with these letters was witness to the marks of attention and respect conferred upon His Majesty's minister in this singular scene. He saw those Princes at the head of their troops, drawn up in order of battle, abandon the great object of their ambition, and, in my presence, gave orders to the army to begin their march back to Norway.

"Perhaps in the annals of history there is not to be found a more striking testimony of deference paid by a foreign prince to a King of England, than that the Prince Royal of Denmark, manifested on this trying occasion."

Such is the narrative as given by Mr. Elliot in his first despatch to Lord Carmarthen; in another on the same subject, he says—"On two distinct occasions the armistice would have been broken by the rash and violent conduct of the King of Sweden" but for his own continued efforts, and his influence with the Prince of Hesse. In order to shew the amount of confidence which was placed in Mr. Elliot by all parties, it will be as well, though at the cost of some recapitulation, to give extracts from the original correspondence of the King of Sweden and of Prince Charles of Hesse.

The King of Sweden in his interview with Mr. Elliot at Carlstadt at the end of September, had, upon the assurances given him by that minister of the support of Vienna and England, resigned

all idea of accepting the French mediation, and had placed himself unreservedly in the hands of Mr. Elliot. On the 2d of October, the King received a courier from Berlin with the information which my grandfather had already derived from Mr. Ewart, of the Prussian determination to come to his assistance by marching troops to Holstein, and he wrote the same day to Mr. Elliot, giving him an account of the despatches, and continuing as follows: "Rien ne pouvoit mieux me confirmer dans la pleine confiance que je vous ai marquée qu'une déclaration aussi précise. Je suis cependant bien aise qu'elle soit arrivée après vous avez donné la marque la moins équivoque de la foi entière que j'ai mise à vos paroles. Le zèle que vous m'avez montré dans une occasion aussi importante ne pouvoit dans ce moment être mieux payé par moi que par mon entière confiance.

* * * *

"Vous ne pouvez douter combien de droit vous vous acquerrez auprès de moi aux sentiments avec lesquels je prie Dieu, qu'il vous ait, M. d'Elliot, dans sa sainte garde.—Votre très affectionné

" GUSTAVE.

"Mariestad, ce 2 Oct. 1788."

Two days later Gustavus wrote from Gottenburg to Baron d'Arnfeldt.*

* Baron d'Arnfeldt was at the time commanding the King's troops in Dalecarlia; after the death of King Gustavus he sent to Mr. Elliot, in 1798, copies of the confidential correspondence which had passed between the King and himself during the autumn of 1788. From this the following extracts are made.

"Gothenbourg, ce 4 d'Octobre 1788.

"Je suis arrivé ici hier au soir à onze heures, mon cher ami, et après avoir attendu une bonne heure au pont-levis par une tempête affreuse, j'ai été bien dédommagé par ma réception. J'avois couru la poste depuis Alengsab, et suis entré à cheval; dès que j'avois passé la dernière poste, et que j'étois parvenu aux quais, une troupe de bourgeois me reconnut, et commença à crier Vive le Roi; à ces cris tout le monde vint aux fenêtres, et sortit des maisons, et accompagné d'une foule immense, je suis arrivé à la maison de gouvernement * * * Gothenbourg n'étoit pas tenable il y a huit jours; aujourd'hui il peut tenir quatre semaines, et dans quelques jours plus longtemps, etc., etc., etc.

"Il faut que le courier d'Elliot ait fait impression, puisque l'on croit que les ennemis se soient arrêtés à Uddevalla. * * *

On the 6th, the King wrote again, "Mardi au plus tard, la ville sera investie. Les Princes passeront demain la rivière; nous ne pouvons leur disputer le passage n'ayant pas de troupes; il faut les harceler et les inquiéter pour retarder le passage. * * * Elliot arrive, il sera reçu, comme il le mérite, sous tous les rapports imaginables."

Three days later the town was saved.

"Gothenbourg, ce 9 Octobre 1788, à 10 heures du soir.

"Je me hâte, mon cher ami, de vous envoyer la convention ci jointe, qui vient d'être signée en ce moment; par les arrangements que nous avons

pris, Gothenbourg est hors d'insulte, et j'espère que dans huit jours nous pourrons parler d'un plus haut ton. Je ne puis assez louer Elliot ; il vient de faire un grand coup qui fait honneur tant à son jugement qu'à son courage, et qui, en sauvant la Suède, conserve la balance de l'Europe et couvre l'Angleterre du gloire. * * * Adieu, mon bon ami, ne vous désespérez pas, nous sortirons bien de cette affaire-ci, et à notre honneur. Je vous embrasse de tout mon cœur. GUSTAVE."

On the 16th October the King wrote that the armistice had been prolonged, and that the Prussian envoy, Baron de Borche, had arrived, "aussi chaud pour nos intérêts que le chevalier Elliot même." On the 19th the King tells his correspondent that the Prince of Hesse had announced to Mr. Elliot his intention of retiring into Norway, but, on the 2d of November, he says that the negotiations have been checked by the pretensions of the Prince of Hesse, that he, the King, has in consequence ordered the immediate occupation of two towns lately evacuated by the enemy, and he adds,— "Je ne puis assez me louer du ministre de Prusse ; il serait à souhaiter qu'Elliot n'eut point diminué de zèle et d'activité depuis que nos affaires ont commencées à se remettre. Il peut avoir raison, mais moi je n'ai pas tort de vouloir tirer parti des conséquences."

It was clearly not the duty of the English Minister to facilitate these views of the King. He represented a neutral power desirous to act fairly by all parties, with the object of maintaining

the balance of power in the north, not of allowing one potentate to over-reach the other. The annual register for 1788 tells the whole narrative of these negotiations at length, and with great accuracy, as may be seen by comparing it with the original and very voluminous papers preserved by Mr. Elliot, containing his ~~original~~ correspondence with the King of Sweden, Count Bernstorff, and Prince Charles of Hesse, and no feature in the story is more creditable to the English Minister than the perfect fairness of his dealing towards both parties, which was rewarded by the confidence of the Swedish King on the one hand, and of the Danish Commander, Prince Charles of Hesse, on the other.

The King of Sweden shewed a greater amount of spirit in facing the unexpected storm which had burst upon his country, than of judgment and forbearance when he found himself no less unexpectedly relieved from its dangers.

Encouraged by the loyal and patriotic spirit which these dangers had raised throughout his people, animated by hatred of the Danes, and by a desire to revenge on them, with the assistance of his two powerful allies, the humiliations they had wreaked on him, he was become less eager to advance the negotiations than to seek a pretext for a fresh rupture. This disposition shewed itself in various ways, to the great embarrassment of the mediating ministers. It first appeared in the seizure, during the armistice, of twenty Norwegian barks, laden with provisions, stores, and arms, for the invading army, which were carried into Gotten-

burg "with all the triumph of a victory ; whilst the King supported this violence on the ground that seas and waters were not mentioned in the instrument."

This act of violence and of bad faith produced a joint and strong remonstrance from the ministers of England and Prussia. Mr. Elliot also wrote a separate appeal to the king's sentiments of honour and justice, pointing out the utter impossibility of his continuing to hold the honourable title bestowed on him by the King and the Prince of Hesse, of arbiter between them, should he become a consenting party to such a violation of the engagement drawn up by his efforts. The King having before complimented the minister on the glorious situation he was placed in, an "individual in the depository of the solemn word of a great king, and of a prince commanding an army." Mr. Elliot now repeated these words in his letter, Annual Register. to recall them to the King's memory, and, as introductory to his subject, he then proceeds:—"It was on the acknowledged character of British veracity, stable as the foundation of their island, the underwritten saw a sovereign and a prince rely, to stop the effusion of blood, on the point of inundating the north of Europe. It was on the verbal assurance of a stranger, credited for the faith of his name and country, that two armies, ready to combat, have resigned their hatred, and renewed their ancient ties of amity and confraternity. It is, therefore, in the sacred name of honour and truth, that the underwritten is obliged to declare that, according to his weak insight, the

objects contested must be restored to Prince Charles of Hesse. He dispenses with entering into a discussion of time and place—he fulfils his task in virtue of his right as umpire.”

Gottenburg,
2d Nov.
1788.

The King's answer to this letter is among Mr. Elliot's papers, and is sufficiently quaint; it was long in coming, since the date is 2d November:—
 “Monsieur de Bork m'a remis la lettre que vous m'avez fait le plaisir de m'écrire, et il vous rendra conte de ce qui a été résolu entre nous. Je suis si ennuyé d'entendre parler de ces bateaux que vous ne trouverez pas étrange que je ne vous en parle plus. Une chose plus intéressante c'est d'avoir des nouvelles de votre santé, qu'on m'a dit être bien mauvaise, comme je crains que le mouvement que vous vous êtes donné pour mes affaires soit en grande partie cause de son dérangement, c'est une raison de plus pour m'y intéresser. J'espère que vous voudrez bien me donner de vos nouvelles et si vous souhaiteriez d'avoir mon médecin et que je
 * * * qu'il vous trouvât, je vous l'enverrais.
 Je vous prie, etc., etc. GUSTAVE.

Illegible.

“Vous voudrez bien vous charger de mes compliments les plus tendres pour le Prince Royal, et bien des honnêtetés pour mon beau frère.”

A few days later, the King, to save himself the mortification of a restitution to his enemies, determined to make over the barks to Mr. Elliot, which he did in the following terms:—

"8 Nov., Gothenbourg.

"NOTE, PAR ORDRE DU ROI.

"Pour donner une preuve de l'estime et de la considération que la conduite de M. Elliot, etc., etc., a inspiré au Roi, et marquer à ce ministre combien Sa Majesté lui sait gré du zèle qu'il a témoigné pour le Roi et la couronne de Suède, Sa Majesté fait présent à ce ministre, et à lui seul, des bateaux pris et de leurs cargaisons, etc., etc." The note goes on to value the cargoes, and to direct that the cost of stores injured, or destroyed, should be paid in money.

(Signé) "COMTE SPARRE,

*"Lieut.-Général Commandant en Chef
sous les ordres du Roi."*

About the same time that the seizure of the barks had taken place, the King had published a proclamation, or manifesto, "evidently intended to excite the greatest possible animosity against the Danes, by most injuriously and unjustly charging on the Norwegian army, and of course upon their general, the ruin of the Swedish provinces in their possession, by the exorbitances and depredations of which they were guilty." It was much to the honour of the English minister that he shewed as much zeal in refuting these calumnies, in justifying the conduct and vindicating the honour of the Prince of Hesse, as he had constantly done in promoting and securing the interests of Sweden. This strangely timed manifesto, which, like the affair of the barks, happened during the first

Annual
Register.

armistice, produced the following note from Prince Charles of Hesse to Mr. Elliot.

"Secrette.

"Je voulais justement vous marquer, mon cher ami, que nous allions penser à notre retraite quand je reçus la lettre du Roi ;* je désire fort de vous voir bientôt ici, comme vous me l'avez promis, et régler définitivement avec vous plusieurs circonstances importantes. Je voulais vous proposer de régler une armistice pour continuer jusqu'au 1^{er} Mai, mais je n'ose en ce moment, après la belle déclaration de Sa Majesté Suédoise, qui ne me paraît guère disposé pour cet effet. . . . Je vous embrasse de tout mon cœur. CHARLES.

"Bahus, Octobre."

The prince wrote a more formal letter after hearing of Mr. Elliot's spirited vindication of his conduct.

"Monsieur—Si l'incartade de Sa Majesté Suédoise avait pu me donner un moment de mauvaise humeur, j'en ai été bien dédommagé par votre chère lettre qui m'a fait un plaisir infini ; agrééz, Monsieur, mes plus vifs remerciements de la noblesse de vos procédés à mon égard. Je suis pénétré de reconnaissance. . . . Je suis dans l'attente du plaisir de vous voir ici. Son Altesse Royale (le Prince Royal) me charge de vous faire ses complimens—nous réglerons ensemble les articles d'une armistice prolongée jusqu'au 1^{er} Mai, et tout ce qui concerne la rentrée du corps auxiliaire

* A hostile letter from the king.

en Norwège pour y prendre ses quartiers d'hiver. D'avance j'ose vous donner plein pouvoir, ne pouvant remettre en des meilleures mains les intérêts des braves troupes que j'ai l'honneur de commander. Nous n'aurons alors qu'à mettre ici la dernière main aux conditions que je ne balancerai pas d'accepter dès que vous les trouvez justes.

“Je suis, avec une considération et une amitié aussi distinguées que sincères et parfaites,—Monsieur, votre très humble serviteur,

“CHARLES, PRINCE DE HESSE.

“*Uddewalle, 26th Octobre, 1788.*”

On Mr. Elliot's appearance in the town of Uddevalla, he received a very curious letter from the magistrate, who, in the name of his fellow-citizens, implored the English minister to make interest on their behalf with the Danish general, in order that they may be relieved of a contribution in specie which he had threatened to levy on them.

The letter, signed Anders Aberg, and dated, Uddewalle, 5th November, says—“'Tis a glory for this town to receive your Excellence, and also for its magistrates to pay their humble attendance. The Swedes in general love and esteem the English nation, but we feel a special veneration and love for your Excellence's high person, who, by the grace of God, is the true and effective man to restore peace and tranquillity to the north. We have the greatest reason to return our humble thanks to your Excellence, who already has mediated, and procured a stop to the cruels of the war, through this most desired and happy suspension

of arms. * * * I venture also to advance this my humble petition, that it might please your Excellence to recommend this little town to further gracious treatment, that no contribution may be asked from it. So we will strive as much as in our power to accommodate us to the will and commandment of their Highnesses, as long as their troops live here, etc.

"The magistrates of this town beg leave to have a share in the grace and benevolence of your Excellence, and henceforth to be in your gracious memory included."

At Uddevalla the final armistice was concluded, to last till the 19th of May; and the story of this curious bit of diplomatic service cannot be more aptly concluded, than by the insertion of the two following letters from the King of Sweden to George the Third, and from the town of Gottenburg to Mr. Elliot.

Copie d'une lettre de Sa Majesté le Roi de Suède à Sa Majesté Britannique—datée de Gothenbourg du 16 Oct. 1788. Conforme à la minute qui se trouve aux archives ministerielles de Suède.

"Monsieur mon Frère et Cousin ! J'ai dans tous les temps mis trop de prix à l'amitié de votre Majesté pour ne pas dans le moment present, où elle m'en donne des preuves si essentielles, lui en témoigner ma reconnaissance. Votre Majesté a senti la nécessité de conserver la balance dans le Nord. Elle a rendu justice à mes sentiments pour elle. Elle a vu que la Suède seule pouvait

arrêter l'explosion de l'ambition de la Russie, et former une barrière pour l'Europe, et Votre Majesté a jugé que, pour effectuer une operation si essentielle pour le bien et la liberté commune, il fallait soutenir la Suède contre le nouvel ennemi, qui, en mêlant la fraude à l'inimitié, menaçait la première ville commerçante de mon Royaume. Avec un ami aussi puissant, je ne pouvais qu'être sûr de réussir, mais je dois à la vérité y ajouter que sans la fermeté, l'ardeur, le courage, et l'habileté du Ministre de Votre Majesté à la cour de Danemarck, le Sieur Elliot, vos bonnes intentions n'eussent point eu le succès désiré. Je lui dois la justice qu'on n'a pu mettre plus d'activité et de zèle dans ses démarches qu'il n'a fait pour retenir l'injuste invasion de mes ennemis, et que, malgré sa santé chancelante et les dangers de toute espèce qu'il a essuyés, il m'a servi comme il aurait pu servir Votre Majesté—c'est à dire, avec la loyauté et la fermeté d'un véritable Anglais, et comme je ne puis mieux m'acquitter envers lui qu'en rendant un fidèle compte de sa conduite à Votre Majesté, et que sa conduite m'est une nouvelle marque de vos sentiments pour moi, je me hâte par ces lignes de vous en témoigner toute ma sensibilité, en vous assurant de tous les sentiments d'amitié, du plus haute estime, et de la parfaite considération avec lesquels je suis, Monsieur, mon Frère et Cousin, de votre Majesté, le Frère et Cousin,

GUSTAVE."

Traduction d'une lettre écrite en Latin et adressée au Sieur Elliot par le 1^{re} Magistrat de

la Ville de Gothenbourg, accompagnant une médaille en or.*

"Monsieur!—La postérité ne pourra sans doute se ressouvenir qu'avec admiration de la reddition merveilleuse de Gothenbourg en l'année 1788, lorsque cette ville était si près d'être attaquée par des forces ennemies, et de subir un joug étranger, et c'est en commémoration de cet événement que la ville a cru de son devoir et de son honneur, d'en éterniser par une médaille sa profonde reconnaissance.

"Vous, Monsieur, fûtes à cette occasion un témoin oculaire de l'héroïsme et de la sagesse avec lesquelles le Roi sut écarter des dangers aussi menaçants, et c'est la juste considération de Sa Majesté pour toute sorte de mérite, qui a éclairé la ville sur ses devoirs envers vous, Monsieur, dont le zèle infatigable dans les négociations les plus épineuses contribua si puissamment à leur succès.

"La ville ne pouvant jamais oublier des services si essentiels, ni effacer le souvenir de vos éminentes qualités personnelles, a cru pouvoir se permettre la liberté de vous offrir un exemplaire de la dite médaille, comme un témoignage des sentiments dont elle est pénétrée, et c'est de sa part aussi bien que de la mienne, que j'ai l'honneur de me dire, bien respectueusement, Monsieur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

"DANIEL PETTERSSON.

"*Bourgmestre de Gothenbourg.*

"*Gothenbourg, le 9 Février 1792.*"

* This medal is now in the possession of my mother.

On his return to Copenhagen, Mr. Elliot found eight Russian ships of the line, which should have wintered at Gottenburg, lying at their anchorage in the Sound; and the reception given him by Count Bernstorff, and the Russian minister, prepared him, in some degree, for the intrigues which the discomfited partizans of the Russian and Danish alliance had insidiously conducted during his absence, with the hope of injuring him in the estimation of his own Court.

A young prince checked in the hour of victory, an army turned back in sight of a great and easy prize, a powerful minister baffled and disappointed, furnished elements of mischief which could not fail to raise a storm.

The accusation brought against Mr. Elliot by his enemies, was that of having out-stepped his instructions—of having declared war against the allied powers of Russia and Denmark, without the authority of his government. As soon as he became aware of the nature of the charges made against him, Mr. Elliot appealed, in a very spirited and manly despatch, to Lord Carmarthen. The letters which had passed between himself and the King of Sweden and the Prince of Hesse sufficiently attested the accuracy of his assertion, that he had never declared a state of war *to exist* between England and Denmark; but that he had pronounced it to be the inevitable consequence of persistence on the part of the Danish commanders in their meditated attack on the first commercial city of Sweden. The despatches which Mr. Elliot had received at various periods throughout the

year from the English government, and the letters of Mr. Ewart, together with the Prussian instructions of M. de Borche, fully justified Mr. Elliot, in his own opinion, in adopting the course which he had so successfully pursued; and after stating this fully and explicitly, he closed his despatch by the avowal of the extreme disappointment and mortification with which he found himself under the necessity of disproving the injurious accusations of his enemies, at a moment when he had looked with confidence to receiving, in the augmented confidence of his own government, the due reward of his arduous services.

To this characteristic and spirited appeal the Duke of Leeds replied as follows:—

“I have the satisfaction of acquainting you, by His Majesty’s command, that he highly approves the zeal and ability which you have manifested in the very delicate and critical situation in which you were placed, and in which you came under the necessity of acting, from the pressure of the moment, without waiting for His Majesty’s particular orders. His Majesty considers the general tenor of the instructions which you have received, and the peculiar urgency of the situation, as having fully justified you in the measures which you adopted to prevent the mischievous consequences of the extension of hostilities,” etc., etc. “You may shew this dispatch to Count Bernstorff.”

The Prussian government was not less warm in its approval of Mr. Elliot’s services to the cause of the Northern alliance.

Mr. Ewart wrote from Berlin, October 31, 1788—"Count Herzberg begs me to repeat to you the strongest assurances of his esteem and admiration, adding that the extraordinary ability you had displayed, not only justly entitled you to the appellation of an excellent minister, but to that of a distinguished statesman, since you had acted much more in the latter capacity than in the former, by having directed the whole of the operations entirely yourself.

"His Prussian Majesty, in a long conversation I had with him the other evening, paid the most flattering compliments to you, and to the whole of your conduct on this critical and important occasion."

The Annual Register tells us that during the ensuing winter, Mr. Elliot, "whose ability and address had produced such essential and timely benefit in the foregoing year, still took the lead on the part of the three allied courts, in all affairs relative to the northern kingdoms;" continuing to exert the utmost zeal in the pursuit of the object which was finally attained, namely, the neutrality of Denmark in the war between Sweden and Russia.

In 1790 Mr. Elliot came home on leave, and many papers, marked "secret," relate to a secret mission to Paris in 1790 and 1791.

His mission to Dresden from 1792 to 1802 was not apparently marked by events of any

peculiar interest, since his correspondence during that period seems to have been somewhat slack. The lively pages of Mrs. St. George's Journal give as complete a picture as could be desired of Mr. Elliot's way of life, manner, and conversation at this time. While he was at Dresden he and my grandmother had the happiness of receiving his brother and Lady Minto under their roof when they passed through Dresden on their way to Vienna, to which court Lord Minto was accredited as envoy extraordinary in 1799. In 1802 Mr. Elliot was appointed to Naples,* where he remained till 1806; and the many packets of letters from diplomatic and political persons which have been preserved from that time, bear witness to the active share he took in the important events then transacting in the Italian Peninsula. In the published correspondence of Nelson, several of his letters have been printed.

Naples was his last diplomatic post. On his return from Italy he was appointed to the government of the Leeward Islands, and in 1814 to the government of Madras. He sailed from England on the 14th of May, having delayed his departure from Plymouth, from day to day, in the hope that the ship bringing home his brother, Lord Minto, late governor general of India, would arrive at that port, where she was already due, before he should have left it. In this expectation he was unfortunately disappointed, and the brothers, who had not seen each other for years, never met again. Lord Minto died a few weeks after his arrival in

* He went out with Lord Nelson in the "Victory."

England from the consequences of a chill caught at the funeral of Lord Auckland.

My grandfather returned to England in 1822, and from that time he resided chiefly in London, till he died, in 1830.





APPENDIX.

APPENDIX A.

Par Aix en Provence, 14 août 1783.

Mon ame a dès longtemps deviné la votre, mon cher Elliot, et je ne sais quel instinct me présageoit vos vertus avant que l'âge les eut développées et m'eut mis à même de les apprécier. Mais lorsque vous m'inspiriez les premiers sentimens vifs et profonds que j'aye connus, lorsqu'au printemps de notre jeunesse je vous chérissais d'une amitié si tendre, qui m'eut dit que je vous devois un jour toute ma reconnoissance, tout mon dévouement pour les vœux et les efforts que d'un bout de l'Europe à l'autre, après tant d'années de silence et d'absence, vous feriez pour mon salut et mon bonheur?

Je reçois une lettre de Londres ; celui qui me l'écrit est un françois estimable, ami du chef des représentans genevois (Clavière), mon intime ami, qui est venu recueillir en Irlande les fruits de la générosité de votre nation. Voici les propres mots du françois dont je vous parle :—

“Un de mes amis qui voyage par toute l'Europe (M. Brac), ami de la vérité, admirateur de vos ouvrages, a vu en passant à Copenhague M. Elliot, ministre plénipotentiaire du Roi d'Angleterre ; je copie ce qu'il me marque pour vous. *Je suis chargé par M. Elliot de savoir ce qu'est devenu M. de Mirabeau le fils, auteur des lettres de cachet. Virchaux m'a assuré qu'il étoit votre connoissance, votre ami—(j'espère l'être un jour quand les circonstances nous auront rapprochés)—il l'a été jadis de toute la famille de cet honnête Anglois dont*

je vous parle qui voudroit le fixer en Angleterre pour le soustraire aux horreurs qu'il a subies depuis. J'avois avec moi son ouvrage ; il vouloit le lire ; il y reconnut la chaleur et le stile de son ami, il m'a prié de lui offrir, au cas qu'il fût libre, un asile en Angleterre, et des moyens de courir avec lui la carrière de l'Ambassade si ce métier lui plait. Écrivez lui son adresse, et des détails sur son existence. En conséquence j'ai écrit à M. Elliot," etc.

Le françois qui m'écrit ainsi s'appelle Brissot de Warville. Il vous sera fort aisé de croire, mon cher ami, que cette lettre m'a touché jusqu'aux larmes. Je n'aurois pas été si malheureux si je n'étois pas né très sensible ; voilà ce que prouve ma vie entière, et jusqu'à mes fautes. Je vous ai reconnu ; et je me suis dit à moi même qu'il est doux de chérir un ami dans un bienfaiteur ; il n'est, comme je le mande au françois à qui je dois cette précieuse nouvelle, que votre nation qui offre de tels traits d'amitié et de générosité ; mais, dans cette nation même, il doit être très rare qu'un jeune homme, jetté dans la carrière de l'ambition, s'attendrisse à l'idée des maux qu'a souffert un ami de Collège qu'il n'a point revu et qui ne lui a point écrit depuis 17 ou 18 ans ; et veuille arracher au despotisme une victime étrangère à sa patrie ; je ne serois pas l'objet d'un sentiment si noble, d'une pensée si haute que je serois enthousiaste de l'homme qui l'a conçu ; jugez ce que vous m'êtes, mon cher et digne ami ; jugez si je me sens pressé du désir de vous serrer dans mes bras. Mais mon ami, voici ma position, jugez la, et conseillez moi.

Je ne vous ferai pas mon histoire. Le détail en seroit immense ; et les détails constituent seuls la vérité des faits. Qu'il vous suffise de savoir aujourd'hui que ma destinée a été un orage continuel, et ma vie un roman ; qu'asservi sous le double despotisme de mon père et du gouvernement provoqué par lui, j'ai fait de grandes fautes et éprouvé de grands maux ; que ces fautes ont tous laissé mon honneur intact, et que quelques unes même ont beaucoup relevé mon caractère moral ; que ces malheurs ont abrégé mes forces et ma vie, mais n'ont flétri ni mon ame ni mon énergie naturelle. Croyez enfin, homme noble et généreux, que je ne prendrois pas encore le nom sacré de votre ami, si j'en étois indigne.

A l'âge de 22 ans je fis un très grand mariage en per-

spective, nul au moment pour les ressources pécuniaires. Mon père, armé de sa dureté ordinaire, n'y suppléa pas. J'eus la folie de me déranger considérablement, et de resserrer ainsi ma dépendance que j'avois déjà très aggravée par mon mariage. Une aventure honorable et d'éclat, mais qui heurtoit le gouvernement dans son opération favorite, la révolution parlementaire, me fit tomber sous le glaive le plus terrible de notre gouvernement. Une lettre de cachet me frappa. Elle servoit trop bien mon père qui toujours m'a voulu perdre. On diroit en vain que la nature n'est point ainsi faite—mon histoire a trop prouvé qu'un père envieux, et une courtisane adroite échappent à toutes les combinaisons dans la marche de leurs haines et de leurs complots. Sept années entières m'ont vu baloté d'ordres arbitraires en ordres arbitraires ; de châteaux en châteaux. Un tel régime n'était pas fait pour assouplir mon ame indépendante et fière. Elle s'est aigrie ; deux fois j'ai brisé mes chaînes et aggravé mon crime *d'esclave révolté*. Deux fois j'ai été repris en pays étranger. La Hollande a eu la lâcheté de me rendre au moment de la guerre ; j'avois été par mille obstacles arrêté dans le projet de passer en Angleterre ; j'ai cruellement expié la faute d'avoir méconnu le seul asile de la liberté ; le Donjon de Vincennes tel que je l'ai peint m'a servi de tombeau pendant 3 ans $\frac{1}{2}$ et 10 jours. Mais là même j'ai prouvé que les esclaves volontaires font plus de tyrans que les tyrans ne font d'esclaves forcés. Le gouvernement a fini par forcer mon père à briser mes chaînes. Il est vrai qu'alors je n'avois point écrit contre *les lettres de cachet et les prisons d'état*.

Vous vous demandez sans doute ce que faisoit Madame de Mirabeau pendant ce temps là. Elle jouoit la comédie, elle donnoit des fêtes ; elle faisoit le métier d'histrione sur la cendre de mon fils. J'ai tout dissimulé, et suis revenu en Provence redemander ma femme, bien moins pour la ravoir, que pour faire tomber par son acquiescement, ou par une discussion judiciaire, les horribles calomnies que les collatéraux de ma femme, intéressés à ce que nous n'ayions point d'enfans, n'avoient cessé de vomir contre moi, pour mieux consolider ma perte, et m'empêcher toute réunion.

J'ai demandé Madame de Mirabeau. Elle a plaidé en séparation, elle a plaidé avec atrocité ; j'ai plaidé avec noblesse.

Trois de vos compatriotes, tous trois mes amis, Lord Peterborough, Sir Bisset, et le Major Baggs, ont été témoins de cet odieux procès, et peuvent rendre témoignage à la vérité ; non que leur déposition comme celle de mes amis ne soit suspecte ; mais ils peuvent dire s'il y a deux opinions dans le public sur ce procès.

Certainement s'il eût été en mon pouvoir de réaliser la plus petite partie de la fortune que je dois avoir un jour, je n'aurois pas soutenu ce procès ; et la vue et le contact d'une terre esclave ne m'auroit pas souillé plus longtemps ; mais lié par la double tyrannie du plus étrange de tous les pères et de la plus impérieuse des nécessités ; entravé par le dérangement de ma première jeunesse, il m'a fallu viser à l'indépendance par la seule route qui put m'y conduire ; et dont les borbiers infects qui la parsemoient m'auroient cependant écarté sur le champ, si mes adversaires n'avoient pas eu l'insigne maladresse de compromettre à chaque pas mon honneur dans la discussion de ce procès.

Je l'ai perdu ; mais je l'eus perdu comme on n'en perd point en France. Surchargé de chaînes de toute espèce ; écrasé de dettes qu'on auroit pu arranger par le seul emploi de mes revenus, ce dont on s'est bien gardé, tout en ôtant le pouvoir de le faire moi même ; investi des préventions qui dans le pays le plus méchant de la terre ont résulté de manège et des relations officieuses des intéressés à ma perte ; entouré d'ennemis, mal servi par mon père, désagréable au gouvernement, je suis arrivé dans une province où il me restoit peu de parens, peu d'amis secrets, et presque pas un avoué, pour lutter contre la famille la plus étendue, la plus accréditée ; contre le particulier de la ville d'Aix, qui en fait les honneurs, et qui passe pour avoir la société la plus aimable, les plus puissans amis, le meilleur cuisinier. Quand je suis arrivé tout le monde me fuyoit ; j'étois l'ante-christ. Je me suis conduit irréprochablement et j'ai été assez heureux pour concilier beaucoup de fermeté et de sagesse. J'ai parlé en public quatre fois ; mon ame a élevé mon génie, et j'ai eu le plus grand succès. C'est avec raison que les anciens du talent de la parole avoient fait un dieu. Le public toujours extrême s'est rangé de mon côté jusqu'à l'idolâtrie. Les battemens de main m'ont poursuivi au palais, aux promenades,

au spectacle. Un arrêt m'a condamné par un complot abominable. L'arrêt a été hué. Le parlement même s'élève contre les cinq juges qui l'ont déshonoré, dit-il, car sur neuf j'en avois quatre pour moi, et les seuls d'entre ces neuf qui soient estimés. La faveur du public a augmenté. La scène s'est ensanglantée. J'ai été obligé de régenter un insolent colonel. Le peuple a été prêt à le lapider ; enfin, je suis devenu comme le démagogue de la provence, et le vainqueur du procès est en fuite, tandis que le vaincu est hautement proclamé, *l'illustre infortuné*.

Je n'avois assurément mérité ni tant de sévérité, ni tant d'indulgence ; et vous croyez bien que ces tristes succès ne me tournent pas la tête, d'autant qu'une insurrection n'est jamais rien en France, et que je n'en serai qu'un peu plus odieux à toutes les autorités. Mais ils m'imposent une sorte d'obligation de faire casser l'arrêt qui est un véritable attentat aux mœurs et à l'ordre public, et qui d'ailleurs, selon notre mode françoise, n'étant point motivé, peut laisser croire auloin qu'aulieu d'être fondé sur un ridicule ergotage de palais, il l'est sur les imputations atroces dont on avoit voulu m'écraser. Mon honneur est donc intéressé à la radiation de cet arrêt après laquelle je suis bien éloigné du désir de raviser le procès comme je le pourrois—première entrave qui s'oppose à ce moment à mon expatriation. Et c'est en vérité la moindre ; car que me sont tous ces motifs secondaires pourvu que je sois bien avec ma conscience, et que je puisse vivre avec des hommes courageux et libres ? Ces motifs d'ailleurs ne sont point sans objections, car mon séjour à Paris est loin d'être sans dangers extérieurs et sans inconvénients domestiques ; on me menace que le ministre s'opposera à mon voyage dans la capitale—ce me seroit assurément une raison de plus d'y aller, si j'avois d'après cela le moindre espoir de succès dans la révision de l'arrêt ; attendu que j'en regarde la poursuite comme une espèce de devoir de citoyen. Mais en est-il de ces devoirs où il n'y a point de patrie ? et ne rendrai-je un plus mauvais service à la vérité et à la justice en la faisant échouer une seconde fois, qu'en lui laissant purement et simplement la vengeance de l'opinion publique ?

Mais, mon cher Elliot, voici des considérations d'une toute autre nature je vous l'ai dit ; bien loin d'arranger mes

affaires, mon père a eu l'odieux machiavélisme de les laisser dans un très grand désordre. Son compte de bien apuré, il se trouve me devoir 40,000liv. ; 70,000 ou 80,000 au plus payeroient toutes mes dettes. Il m'avoit donné par contrat de mariage 8500liv. de pension annuelle. Il les touche maintenant, sous prétexte de payer mes dettes ; n'en paye aucun créancier, et prélève seulement une pension alimentaire de 2400^l. qu'il m'abandonne très en rechignant. Je n'ai pas pu parvenir encore à changer cet état de choses. Je n'ai pas pu atténuer qu'il me permit d'emprunter pour éteindre en bloc toutes mes dettes, et m'assurer ainsi un revenu indépendant. Mon oncle, qui lui prodigue son bien et ses épargnes, n'a pas eu plus de crédit que moi même à cet égard. Il a subvenu à tous les frais de l'affaire actuelle ; mais grandbailli de Malthe, riche seulement en viager, épuisé par son frère, lié par des devoirs de reconnaissance envers des entours auxquels il ne peut laisser que de l'argent—cet honnête homme qui n'a de défaut que son invincible foiblesse pour son frère, ne peut pas beaucoup, et sa volonté est découragée par l'inutilité de ses efforts.

Vous sentez, mon cher ami, qu'il ne me convient pas d'être à charge à personne. Il me paroît impossible que j'obtienne aucun emploi dans un pays aussi étranger que le votre à tout François. Rappelez vous que dès l'âge de 16 ans je voulois n'avoir d'autre patrie que ce noble pays de la liberté, et que votre honnête Liston m'en détourna par ce motif. D'ailleurs je ne prendrois certainement pas de place d'indigne de moi, ni d'une certaine subalternéité. Je suis capable (et j'ai été mis à cette épreuve) du courage nécessaire pour gagner ma vie, mais je n'aurois pas celui d'être le stipendié d'un grand seigneur quelconque. Ajoutez que je ne laisse pas que de s'être connu en Angleterre (le nom de mon père y a de la célébrité) que je le serois bientôt davantage par la nature des amis de votre nation que je me suis faits en France, et que j'y serai nécessairement un homme de convention ; il ne me sera point permis d'y être l'homme de la nature, et c'est un grand malheur pour quiconque se sent un peu audessus des rêves de la vanité humaine.

Voilà bien des inconvéniens, mon cher Elliot. Il y en auroit beaucoup de sauves, je l'avoue, si vous aviez assez de

crédit à la cour de Copenhague, ou chez tel autre prince du nord que ce puisse être pour me faire obtenir quelque emploi. La carrière est moins brillante qu'en Angleterre sans doute ; mais elle est moins exclusive. En Angleterre il faut être Anglois ; dans le Nord il ne faut souvent qu'être françois.

— Au reste, je conviendrai naïvement avec vous, mon cher ami, que toutes ces objections me pèsent peu en comparaison de la liberté garantie, et de la possibilité de me livrer à mon énergie naturelle ; deux avantages que je ne puis guère trouver que loin de mon déplorable pays. Mais la nécessité ! la nécessité ! qui sait vaincre cet ennemi ? peu d'hommes en ont le courage, et il ne me manque pas. Mais la possibilité ? je ne la vois pas. Le bonheur ? je suis payé pour ne pas compter sur le mien.

Parlez moi donc désormais, mon cher Elliot, en conseil et en guide, après m'avoir appelé en ami et en bienfaiteur. Que me conseillez-vous ? quelles avances me seroient nécessaires ? quelle marche dois-je tenir ? je puis espérer de mon oncle une somme d'argent qui m'aideroit à une expatriation ; quelle doit-elle être ? Mais je ne crois pas pouvoir raisonnablement compter sur une amélioration de fortune du vivant de mon père. Il est si dur et si dérangé, que ce seroit présumer que de s'en flatter. Il aime beaucoup mieux garder les 6100^{liv.} qu'il retient sur mon revenu que de me payer les 40,000^{liv.} qu'il me doit, et au moyen des quels n'ayant plus que 2000^{liv.} d'intérêts à supporter sur mon revenu pour me mettre en règle vis à vis de mes créanciers, j'aurois 6500^{liv.} annuelles, et avec cela l'on vit dans tous les pays du monde, surtout quand on a plus de 60,000^{liv.} de rente substituées sur sa tête. Comment remédier à cela ? En plaidant contre mon père ? c'est une extrémité bien déplorable, et très loin d'être sans danger. Il faut donc se résigner, et combien cette résignation me seroit payée si j'achetois la liberté à ce prix !

Ecrivez moi surtout ceci, mon cher ami, et pardonnez de bien longs et fastidieux détails et un fatigant griffonage. Vous n'auriez pas pu me conseiller si vous n'eussiez pas exactement connu mon état de situation ; et sur cette ébauche rapide, à peine, et bien à peine, pourrez vous en juger.

Parlez moi nettement, et dites moi quelles ressources vous prévoyez pouvoir me ménager dans le pays quelconque où vous m'appellerez. Si vous me conseillez de partir, je partirai ; ce sera ma manière de vous remercier, et c'est la plus éloquente du moins pour mon cœur. Le votre est dès longtemps à l'unison, et vous n'aurez pas de peine à croire que celui, qui vous a tant aimé quand il n'étoit que votre polisson de camarade, sent doubler son dévouement pour vous, quand vous enchaînez toute son estime et toute sa reconnaissance. Vale et me ama.

MIRABEAU *fils.*

Donnez moi des nouvelles de votre respectable père, de votre aimable frère, et du bon Liston ; silent, il ne vous est sûrement pas étranger. Prenez la voie la plus courte pour me répondre, et adressez moi par duplicata, 1^{re} enveloppe à M. Boyer, receveur des droits du greffe à Aix en Provence, et dessous, pour le Comte de Mirabeau ; et au Duc de Mansfield, votre ambassadeur à Paris, avec prière de m'adresser le paquet à Aix en Provence, si je ne suis point à Paris, rue de Seine à l'hotel de Mirabeau. Donnez moi votre adresse direct.

Si vous me faites partir, prescrivez moi ma route, et dites moi quelle sorte de lettres de recommandation il me faut pour Copenhague, ou pour Londres.

APPENDIX B.

The following dispatch will illustrate the state of feeling between Denmark and Russia alluded to in the text :—

Copenhagen, 25th March 1788.

My Lord—Paul Jones has been treated with very singular marks of distinction at this court.

Soon after his arrival, Count Bernstorff invited him to dinner with the foreign ministers, but he could not profit of that invitation on account of an indisposition.

He was presented by the French minister to the Royal

family, and supped at the same table with the King of Denmark and the Prince and Princess Royal,—an honour conferred, before, only on officers who rank as generals, or on foreigners of high birth or elevated situation.

At the sacred concerts performed at court, he occupied one of the chairs usually assigned to foreign ministers.

As the public express equal surprise and resentment at this extraordinary conduct towards a person notorious as Paul Jones, and who had committed acts of piracy within the limits of the Danish dominion, I found great difficulty in forming any plausible conjecture for the reasons of so undignified a proceeding, till I learnt yesterday that the Russian minister avows that this adventurer is to be employed in the Empress of Russia's navy in a high rank. I therefore now attribute this glaring deviation of the court of Denmark from its usual decorum to its unbounded deference, or probably even fear, of the court of St. Petersburg. Paul Jones, I am assured, says that he has received proposals from the Empress to command the squadron in the Black Sea.

Baron la Houze, the French minister, left his name with a card signed *le Commodore Paul Jones* at my door. Not having returned the visit, the French minister asked me at court, in the presence of a numerous circle, if I knew he had been at my door with *le Chef d'Escadre M. Jones*, I answered that I was not ignorant of that circumstance and desired that he would be pleased to observe that he had not been admitted. To this he replied, '*Pourquoi?*' and I again answered, '*Qu'il ne le seroit jamais chez moi en pareille société.*'

I have the honour, etc.

H. ELLIOT.



INDEX.

- Aberg, Anders, magistrate of Udde-
walle, letter from, to Mr. Elliot, 281,
282.
Ali, Hyder, 202.
Almack's, 227.
American agents, two, at the Prussian
Court, 90, 91; abstraction of their
papers, 92; Lord Suffolk's despatch
on the subject, 93.
America, news of the struggle for poli-
tical independence, 68, 69; Hugh's
wish to join the army there as a
volunteer, 43, 44, 69; policy of Lord
North's ministry, 116 (*see* Burgoyne);
debates on American affairs, 207-213.
Amyand, Sir George, 77.
Ancaster, Duke of, 30, 45, 156; Duchess
of, 125.
Anecdote, characteristic, of Hugh, in
connection with the acknowledgment
by France of the independence of
America, 143.
Anecdotes of Frederick the Great, 163-
166, 168-172, 203.
Anhalt-Dessau, Prince and Princess of,
180.
Annual Register, references to, 277,
et seq.
Army, volunteers for the, 43; reply of
Lord Suffolk, and opinions of friends,
43, 44, 69.
Arnfeldt, Baron d', correspondence be-
tween, and Gustavus III. of Sweden,
273.
Auckland, Lord, *see* Eden.
Auersperg, Princess of, 46; Prince of,
231.
Austrian Court, 191, *et seq.*
Bagnall, Mr., 30.
Banks, failure of, in 1772, and its con-
sequences, 51.
Barbarodka, M. de, 186.
Barrington, Lord, 13, 50, 52, 70.
Bavaria and its Court (*see* Munich), 22-
28, 37.
Bavarian succession, war of the, 135.
Beckenhams, Mr. Eden's farm at, 227,
228.
Bellamy, Thomas, a name assumed by
Mr. Hugh Elliot, 33.
Berlin, Hugh's appointment to, 72, 75,
82; description of the Court, 83-88;
life at, described in a letter to
Eleanor, 88-90; the affair with the
two American agents from the rebel
Congress, 90-94; subsequent rela-
tions with the Court, 95; misunder-
standings with his family, 109-111,
126; feeling at Berlin towards Eng-
land on the American War, 133, 134;
letters from, 138-140; attachment to
Mademoiselle de Krauth, 159; mar-
riage, 161; gets leave of absence,
162; return to Berlin, 174; subsequent
"white years," 175-177; domestic
troubles, 206, 218, 219; correspon-
dence with Sir Gilbert as to his recall,
215-223; esteem in which he was held
by Prussian Ministers, 212, 213; pre-
paration to leave Berlin, 225.
Bertie, Lady Priscilla, 88, 125, 156.
Bernstorff, Count, 253, 258, 267, 270,
276, 285.
Bombelles, Marquis de, letter to, 138.
Borche, Baron de, 180, 181, 275, 286.
Boufflers, Madame de, 11, 12.
Bourbon, House of, 266.
Brydone, Mr., 15, 30, 45, 85, 127, 143.
Buccleuch, Duke of, 81, 119.
Buckinghamshire, Earl of, 101.
Burke, Edmund, 158, 175, 197, 198.
Burgoyne, General, 44, 222; intelligence
of his surrender at Saratoga, 106-108,
117, 143, 145, 146.
Burrell, Mr., 156.

- Burrell, Miss Julia, 157.
 Burrell, Miss, 121, 122.
 Bute, Lord, 50, 67, 116, 215.
 Byng, Admiral, 179.
- Carlisle, Lord, 118, 124.
 Carmarthen, Lord, 257, 258, 267-270.
 Carnegie, Sir David, 247, 259.
 Catharine II., 16, 18, 266.
 Cathcart, Lady, 259.
 Cathcart, Lord, 157.
 Cavendish, Lord J., 222.
 Charles, Prince of Hesse, 264, 270, 276;
 letters to Mr. Elliot, 280, 281.
 Chartres, Duc de, 12.
 Chatham, Lord, 115, 116, 199.
 Cholmondeley, Lord, 221, 228.
 Christian VII. of Sweden, 243, 251.
 Clari, Countess, 232.
 Clément, M., correspondence with, 191-
 196.
 Clinton, Lord John, 140; correspond-
 ence with, 143-146.
 Clinton, Sir H., 145, 146.
 Coalition Ministry, 245-247.
 Cobentzel, M. de, 186.
 Conway, General, 208.
 Cook, Captain, 54.
 Cooper, Sir Grey, 70.
 Coote, Sir Eyre, 202.
 Cornewall, Lady, 101.
 Cornwall, Miss Velters, 77.
 Cornwallis, Lord, 207.
 Correspondence, Swedish, 262-289.
 Cranbourne, Lady, 120.
 Copenhagen, Mr. Elliot's appointment
 to, 224; enters on his new mission,
 234, 235; conduct of Mrs. Elliot at
 this juncture, 235, 236 (*see* Kniph-
 ausen); his impressions of the place,
 242; Swedish Court, 243; his indiffer-
 ence to politics at this time, 244, 245;
 Danish politics, 251-257; revolution
 in the government, Mr. Elliot's conduct
 throughout giving great satisfaction to
 his Government, 258. *See* Swedish
 Correspondence.
 Coxe, William, 243, 263.
- Danube, campaign on the, 17.
 D'Arblay, Madame, "Diary" of, 102,
 145.
 Daun, Madame (Delta), 26, 30, 37.
 Death of Mr. Hugh Elliot, 289.
 Debates, Parliamentary, 64, 143-147.
 Deffand, Madame du, 12, 25, 48, 97,
 262.
 Delille, L'Abbé, 11.
 "Delta," *see* Daun.
 Denmark, politics of, 251-257.
 Derby, Lady, 120.
 Dessau, visit to, 180, 182.
 Digby, Admiral, 259.
 Dimsdale, Baron, 188.
 Divorce of Mr and Mrs. Hugh Elliot,
 240.
- Dresden, Mr. Elliot's mission to, 287.
 Duel with Baron Kniphausen, 237, 238;
 Mr. Elliot congratulated by Prussian
 royalties, 239; subsequent illness,
 240; letter from Mr. Liston, 240,
 241.
- Eden, Mr. Morton, successor of Mr.
 Elliot at Munich, 48.
 Eden, William (afterwards Baron Auck-
 land), private secretary to Lord Suf-
 folk, 70; letter to, on society in
 Bavaria, 23, 24; letters from, to
 Hugh, 44, 94, 99, 125; marriage of,
 to Eleanor Elliot, 72; Eleanor-Agnes,
 their eldest daughter, 101; letter on
 General Burgoyne's catastrophe, 117;
 appointed one of the commissioners
 to America, 118, 122-125; letter to,
 on the probable results of negotiation,
 133; letters from America, 149-155;
 Catherine-Isabella, their second
 daughter, 155; return to England,
 158; appointed to Irish Secretaryship,
 200; letter to Mr. Hugh on political
 speculations in England, 228-230;
 last glimpse of the Edens, 258, 259.
- Edinburgh, studies in, 5.
 Egerton, Miss, 100.
 Elliot, Alick, 3, 50; his return from
 India, 72; accompanies his father to
 the Continent, 74; return to India,
 75, 98; his death, 158.
 Elliot, Bob, 3, 50, 59, 99, 201, 259;
 preaching in Bristol Cathedral, 148.
 Elliot, Captain John, 124, 180, 197, 203-
 205.
 Elliot, Dowager Lady (Helen Stuart),
 5, 54.
 Elliot, Eleanor, 50; married to William
 Eden, Esq., afterwards Lord Auck-
 land, 44, 72; letters to Hugh, 63, 68,
 69, 100, 121. *See* Eden.
 Elliot, Gilbert, elder brother of Hugh,
 and afterwards first Earl of Minto;
 early youth, 4-12, 50; his successful
 debüt at the Bar, 38, 39, 64, 65; letters
 to Hugh, 52, 97, 106-110, 119, 155,
 197, 205, 207, 209-213, 249, 250;
 elected M.P. for Morpeth, 72; his
 marriage to Anne Maria Amyand, 77;
 returned for Roxburghshire after his
 father's death, 82 (*see* House of Com-
 mons); visit to Paris, 96; returns
 with the family to England, 97;
 Lady Elliot's first impressions of Rox-
 burghshire, 105, 106; remarks on the
 American war, 118, 207-213; letters
 from Hugh to, 129, 180 (*see* Berlin);
 threatened contest for county of Rox-
 burgh, 156; visit to Berlin, 187, 201;
 his relations with Burke, 199; visit to
 the Continent, and birth of their first
 child at Lyons, 225; loss of his seat
 in Parliament, 248; visit of the family
 to Bath, 249; subsequent country

- life, 260; appointed envoy-extraordinary to Vienna, 288; death of, 288, 289.
- Elliot, Isabella, 3, 50, 114, 200; letters to Hugh, 53, 61, 62, 67, 99, 100, 122, 123, 132, 156, 157, 200, 226, 246; letters on war with France, 120, 132; how affected by Mr. Hugh's marriage, 172, 173; illness of, 250, 251.
- Elliot, Lady (Agnes Murray Kynynmound), 2, 3; accompanies Sir Gilbert to Nice in his last illness, 74; her return to England, 79, 97, 104; her letters to Hugh, 51, 52, 54, 56-58, 65-67, 70, 71, 79, 98, 113; misunderstanding with Hugh, 109-111; failing health, 112, 113, 125, 148; her interest in political affairs, 64, 115; removal to Bristol, 148; her death, 155, 156.
- Elliot, Miss Jane, 5.
- Elliot, Mr. Andrew, 157, 247, 259.
- Elliot, Nancy (Lady Carnegie), 247, 259.
- Elliot, Sir Gilbert, third Baronet, M. P., 2, 3, 16-20, 44, 71; his political influence, 50-52, 54, 65; his last illness and death, 73-76, 79; interment at Minto, 79.
- England, position and prospects of, in 1778, 131-135.
- English visitors at Munich, 30.
- Erskine, Tom (afterwards Lord Chancellor), 65.
- Espinasse (L'), Mademoiselle, 12.
- Ewart, Mr., Minister at Berlin, 267, 286, 287.
- Expenses of a foreign Minister, 34.
- Family affection, a characteristic of the Elliots, 2.
- Fawcener, Mr., 100.
- Fayette, Madame de la, 162.
- Ferdinand, Prince of Prussia, 239.
- Festive meetings at Minto, 59.
- Finch, Lady Charlotte, 100.
- Finckenstein, Count, 171.
- Fleming, Miss, 157.
- Folard, M. de, 27.
- Foley, Mr., 62.
- "Flowers of the Forest," a ballad of Miss Jane Elliot, 5.
- Fox, Charles James, 65, 71, 198, 215-223, 229, 247.
- France, preparations for war with, 119.
- Frederick the Great, 82, 179-182; anecdotes of, 163-166, 168-172.
- Fürst, M. le Baron de, 169.
- Gambling, prevalence of, on the Continent, in last century, 218.
- Gassner, a miracle-worker in Bavaria, 25.
- Gates, General, 143.
- Geoffrin, Madame, 11.
- George III., 50, 69, 70.
- Germaine, Lord G., 125.
- Gloucester, Duke of, 31.
- Gordon, Lady Duff, 77.
- Gordon riots, 199.
- Göthenbourg, letter to Mr. Elliot from the burgomaster of, accompanied with a gold medal, 284.
- Grantham, Lord, 224.
- Grimston, Lady, 125.
- Gunning, Sir R., minister at Peterburgh, 19, 54.
- Gustavus III. of Sweden, 262; his charge of treachery against the Prince Royal of Denmark, 265; his desperate position, 265; support of Prussia and England, 266, 273; Mr. Elliot's despatches on the subject, 268-272; and correspondence with Gustavus, 276, *et seq.*; letter to George III., 282, 283.
- Hamilton, Duke of, 121.
- Harrington, Lord, 157.
- Harris, Mr. (afterwards Sir James), 85, 86, 179; his marriage, 101-103; correspondence of, with Mr. Elliot, 160, 189-191, 207.
- Harris, Mrs. (afterwards Lady), letters to Hugh, 103, 104, 184-187; her love of display, 104; a summer at Bath, 249.
- Hartig, Count, 27.
- Harvey, William, 88, 89, 130, 158, 183.
- Hatzfeld, Madame de, 231.
- Henry, Prince, brother of Frederick the Great, 84, 214, 218, 239; his court at Rheinsberg, 84, 85, 87.
- Hereford, Lady, 77.
- Hertzberg, M. de, 165, 267, 287.
- Holland (Lord), his "Memoirs of the Whig Party" referred to, 65, 221.
- House of Commons, Sir Gilbert's first public appearance in, 106.
- Howe, Lord, 146.
- Howe, Sir William, 146.
- Hume, David, 4, 11, 25.
- India Bill, The, 247.
- Jackson, Mr., commissioner to America, 118, 124.
- Johnson, Dr. Samuel, 102.
- Johnston, Governor, 124.
- Kaphengst, Baron, 84, 87; letter to, 139, 140.
- Kaunitz, Prince, 231.
- Keith, Lord, 128.
- Keith, Marshal, 129.
- Keith, Sir Robert, 37, 231.
- Kempenfeldt, Admiral, 203.
- Keppel, Admiral, 145, 146.
- Kerr, Lord Robert, 81, 156.
- Knipphausen, Baron, 84, 87; duel with Mr. Elliot, 236, 237; his marriage with Mrs. Elliot, 240.

- Krauth, M. von, 85.
 Krauth, Mademoiselle de (daughter of Madame Verelst), 90, 126, 136, 137; Hugh's attachment to, 159; their marriage, 161; picture of "Charlotte," 176; their divorce, 240. *See* Kniphausen.
- La Harpe, an *Encyclopédiste*, 11.
 Langlais, General, 14.
 Leeds, Duke of, 286.
 Lewis, Mrs. Frankland, 77.
 Lieutenantcy presented by General Scott to Hugh Elliot, 9; refusal of its ratification, 13, 50, 51.
 Ligne, Prince de, 191.
 Lincoln's Inn, entered at, 55.
 Lindsay, Lord, 30, 45, 121, 183.
 Lines composed by Sir Gilbert (3d Earl) on the death of his father, 79, 80.
 Liston, Mr., tutor of Gilbert and Hugh, 4, 5; becomes private secretary to the latter when Minister at Munich, 25, 35; letters—on ministerial expenses, 34; on Sir R. Keith's visit to Munich, 37; becomes confidant of a sentimental correspondence, 47; describes, in a letter, Mr. Harris's marriage, 101-103; letters to Hugh, 162-171, 182, 183, 221; appointment as Secretary to Lord Mount-Stuart's embassy at Turin, 230; extracts from his letters, 231-234, 240, 241.
 London, visits of the family to, 53-55, 61-65.
 Louis XVI., of France, 22.
 Lowther, Sir G., 202.
 Lusi, Count, 221.
 Lynedoch, Lord, 97.
 Lyttleton, Lord, 71.
- M'Neill, Sir John, 203.
 Mahon, Lord, 146, 174.
 Maltzahn, M., Prussian ambassador to England, 180.
 Mann, Horace, 205.
 Maria Theresa, Empress of Austria, 46.
 Marischal, Lord, 128-130.
 Markham, Dr., of Oxford, 8.
 Marlborough, Duke of, 151.
 Marriage of Mr. Hugh Elliot, 161; reception of the news by the family, 172, 173; birth of first child, Isabella, 183; of second, 207.
 Matilda, Queen of Sweden, 243, 251.
 Maximilian, Prince, of Deux-Ponts, 26.
 Medal presented to Mr. Elliot by the town of Gothenbourg, 284.
 Mesmer, 85.
 Metz, study of military science at, 12.
 Military patronage, 13, 14, 51.
 Miller, Lady, 149.
 Ministry of the day described in a letter from Lady Elliot, 70.
 Minto, description of, — its past and present appearance contrasted, 60, 61.
- Minto, Earl of; *see* Elliot, Gilbert.
 Minto, Lord (Justice-Clerk), 5, 9.
 Mirabeau, 4; visits Sir Gilbert at Bath, 249; letter from, 291-298.
 Miracles in Bavaria, 25.
 Mitchell, Sir Andrew, 231.
 Molesworth, Miss, 122.
 Money difficulties, 32-36, 126, 173.
 Montesquieu, 11.
 Montréal, Count, 112.
 Moore's Journals quoted, 180.
 Mount-Stuart, Lord, 230-234.
 Munich, appointed plenipotentiary at, 19, 20; duties there, 22-24; society in, 25, 26; the Court, 25, *et seq.*; amusements, etc., 27, 28; presentation at Court, 29; pecuniary embarrassment, 32-36; leaves Munich for Ratisbon, 39; close of his first mission, 47, 48.
- Naples, Mr. Elliot's mission to, 288.
 Neckar, M., 174.
 Neipperg, Count and Countess, 46, 260.
 Nice, Sir Gilbert ordered to, 74; accompanied thither by Lady Elliot and Isabella, 74; return of the latter to England, 79, 97.
 Noailles, M. de, 119.
 Nord, Count and Countess de, 194.
 North, Lord, misunderstanding between, and Sir Gilbert, 50, 54, 64; visit to the Norths, 67; his Ministry described, 70, 229; mentioned, 115, 125, 151, 174.
 Northampton, Lady, 78.
 Northern alliance, Mr. Elliot's services to, 286; *see* Gustavus.
 Northington, Lord, 101.
 Northumberland, Duchess of, 56.
 Nymphenburg, a favourite resort of the Bavarian Court, 27; fire near the Palace, 36.
- Opera, The London, 53, 62.
 Orloff, Prince, 63.
 Osnabruck, Bishop of, 188.
 Oxford, Gilbert and Hugh's residence at, 7-10.
- Palliser, Sir Hugh, 145, 146.
 Paris, Gilbert and Hugh's first residence at, 4; second visit, 10-12; visits, while *en route* to Munich, 22.
 Parliament, Lady Elliot's description of a debate in, 64. *See* Debates.
 Pearson, Sir Richard, 205.
 Penn, William, 35.
 Personnel of a mission, 35.
 Petersham, Lord, 157.
 Petersohn, Colonel, letter from, 21.
 Pettersson, Daniel, burgomaster of Gothenbourg, letter from, 284.
 Picture of Mrs. Hugh Elliot, 177.
 Piercy, Lord, 157.
 Pitt, William, 223, 262.

- Pitt, William Morton, 30, 48, 141-143, 227, 260; letters to, from Hugh, 126, 140, 141, 183; letter from, to Hugh, 173, 174.
- Plumstead, Miss (afterwards Mrs. Andrew Elliot), 259.
- Polignac, Countess Jules de, 175.
- Pollnitz, Baron, letter of, quoted, 28.
- Poniatowski, Prince, 14.
- Portland, Duke of, 253.
- Potemkin, 19, 189.
- Pouschkin, M., Russian minister in London, 18.
- Prince Royal of Denmark, afterwards Frederick VI., 254-257, 263, *et seq.*
- Prussia, Prince of (afterwards King Frederick-William II.), 84, 140, 160, 183; visit to St. Petersburg, 190.
- Prussian Court, 83; *see* Berlin.
- Queensberry, Duchess of, 56.
- Ratisbon, Mr. Elliot's appointment as representative of the Elector of Hanover at, 39; life at, 46.
- Rheinsberg, court of Prince Henry at, 84, 85, 87; sojourn of Mr. Elliot and family in the vicinity of, 219, 220.
- Rhetorical Society, Edinburgh, Hugh's early appearances at, 7.
- Richmond, Duke of, 131, 229.
- Rockingham, Lord, 116; ministry of, 213, *et seq.*, 229.
- Rodney, Admiral, 197.
- Romanzow, Marshal, 16, 18, 186; letter from, 19; mother of, 104.
- Rousseau, 141.
- Roxburgh, Duke of, 81.
- Roxburghshire politics, 80, 81.
- Rumbold, Mr., 52.
- Russia and Denmark, state of feeling between, 263, *et seq.*, 298, 299.
- Russian army, Mr. Elliot's service in the, 17-19.
- Russian Court, 190.
- Sandwich, Lord, 70.
- Sans Souci, palace of, 83, 129.
- Sarny, Baron, 27.
- Sarny, Madame, 36.
- Scotland, Earl Marischal of, 128-130.
- Scott, Beckie, 62.
- Scott, General, of Scotstarbet, 9; *see* Lieutenancy.
- Scott, Lady Diana, 105.
- Seefield, 37; *see* Torring-Seefield.
- Seinsheim, Count, Prime Minister in the Bavarian Court, 23, 27.
- Shelburne, Lord, 122; ministry of, 223, 245.
- Shuppach, M., a quack doctor at Berne, 32.
- Siddons, Mrs., 227.
- Smith, Adam, 11.
- Somerset, Lady Mary (afterwards Duchess of Rutland), 63.
- Somerville, Dr. Thomas, letter from, to Lady Elliot, 7.
- Sophia Dorothea, mother of Frederick the Great, and daughter of George I., 85.
- Southesk, Earl of, 247.
- Sparre, Count, 279.
- St. George, Mrs., Journal of, 288.
- Stackelberg, Count, 16-18.
- Stanhope, Lady Anna Maria, 88.
- Stanhope, Lady Henrietta, 62.
- Stanislas Augustus, 16.
- Stanley, Mr., 30, 44, 183, 216, 221, 228.
- Stanhope, Mr., 157.
- Stewart, Colonel (son of Lord Bute), 121.
- Stewart, Frederick, 10.
- Stockholm, Mr. Elliot at, 267.
- Storer, Mr., 124.
- Stormont, Lady, 125.
- Stormont, Lord, 14, 40, 54, 97; letter from, 15, 16; letter to, 179.
- Strasburgh, visit to, 13.
- Struensee, Count, execution of, 251.
- Stuart, Professor George, of Edinburgh, superintends the studies of the young Elliots, 5; letters from, 5, 6.
- Stuart, Sir Robert, of Allanbank, Bart., 5.
- Suffolk, Lord, 20, 32, 43, 54, 64, 91, 93, 100, 131, 158.
- Swedish Court, 243; *see* Copenhagen.
- Swedish Correspondence, 262-286; *see* Gustavus III.
- Switzerland, rustication in, 37.
- Thiebault, 82, 90, 133, 159, 168, 171, 206, 235.
- Thrale, Mrs., 102, 145.
- Thun, Countess, 15, 37, 45, 46; letters of, to Mr. Elliot, on his going to Ratisbon, 40-42; on Berlin society, 87, 88; letter to, 138; visits of Mr. Liston to, 232, 233.
- Thurlow, Chancellor, 212.
- Thurot, M., "pigmy fleet" of, 204, 205.
- Tooke's (William) "Life of Catherine II.," quoted, 18.
- Torring-Seefield, Madame de, 27.
- Townshend, Lord, 55.
- Tunbridge Wells, visit of the family to, 65.
- Twickenham, residence at, 1, 4; meeting of the whole family at, in 1776, 73.
- Vandreuil, Chevalier de, 205.
- "Venice Preserved," quotation from, 217.
- Verelst, Countess de, 85, 87, 159, 218; letters to Hugh, 214, 235.
- Vestris, 200.
- Vienna, Mr. Elliot's visit to, 14; failure in his object, 16; *see also* 191, *et seq.*; Mr. Liston at, 230, 234.
- Village on fire, Mr. Elliot's conduct at, 36.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>Vismes, Mr. de, Mr. Elliot's predecessor at Munich, 35. Voltaire, 182. Voyers, Marquis de, 175.</p> <p>Wales, Prince of, 53. Walpole, Horace, visited by Gilbert and Hugh at Paris, 10; his "Correspondence" and "Journals" referred to, 11, 12, 50, 64, 115, 118, 146, 205, 227, 229. Warsaw, visit to, 16. Washington, General, 259.</p> | <p>Waterton, Miss (afterwards Lady Grimston), 56. Weymouth, Lord, 119. Woronzow, Count, 186. Wraxall's "Memoirs of the Court of Berlin" referred to, 15, 17, 25, 82, 83. Wrech, the Counts, 84, 87. Wrech, the Baroness, letter to, 188. Wroughton, Sir Thomas, 17, 18, 54; letter to, 178.</p> <p>Yorke, Sir P., 151. Yve, Marquis Louis d', 46, 83, 84, 260.</p> |
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Intention
p. 31-24

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